

FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

RANDOLPH, MASS.

150<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary

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1731-1881

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1860

# PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

## One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary

OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE

*Randolph, Mass*

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

RANDOLPH, MASS.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8TH, 1881.

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## Preliminary.

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AT a meeting of the First Congregational Church of Randolph, held November 18, 1880,

It was voted: That the approaching One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the organization of this Church be observed with appropriate exercises;

That Rev. Edmund K. Alden, D.D., be invited to deliver the Memorial Address;

That a Committee of Arrangements be appointed, into whose hands all further preparations shall be intrusted;

That the Parish connected with this Church be cordially invited to unite with us in the proposed celebration.

The invitation at once extended to Dr. Alden he was obliged to decline, and a readjustment of the programme became necessary.

At the Annual Meeting of the First Parish in April, 1881, a committee was appointed to coöperate with the existing committee of the Church.

Cordial invitations to the celebration were extended to surviving absent, or past, members of the Church, Parish, and Congregation; to the First Congregational Church and Society in Braintree; the Winthrop Church and Society in Holbrook; the Baptist Church and Society in Randolph; to Pastors and Clergymen in neighboring towns; to the Honorable Board of Selectmen, and the several School Committees of Randolph; and to many others.

The excellence of the singing by the regular choir was noticeable; some of the music rendered was composed for the occasion by Mr. Lyman F. Brackett, Organist and Director.

In addition to the services of the Church choir, a popular feature of the occasion was the impressive singing of ancient hymns by the chorus choir of one hundred voices, accompanied by an old-time orchestra, organized for the occasion and directed by Mr. John Berry Thayer.

The following was the

## Order of Exercises.

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Afternoon, at two o'clock.

Organ Voluntary.

Anthem.

Reading of the Scriptures.

By REV. F. P. CHAPIN, of the First Church, Weymouth.

Prayer.

By REV. E. RUSSELL, D. D., of Holbrook.

Singing.

"O God of Bethel, by whose hand" . . . . *P. Doddridge, 1737.*

Historical Discourse.

By REV. J. C. LABAREE.

Singing.

"Give me the wings of faith, to rise" . . . . *Isaac Watts, 1709.*

History of the Sabbath School.

By REV. EBENEZER ALDEN, of Marshfield.



**Singing.**

"O Lord, our fathers oft have told," . . . *Tate and Brady, 1696.*

**Historical Sketch of our Four Meeting-Houses.**

By BENJAMIN DICKERMAN, ESQ.

**Singing.**

"Praise ye the Lord; exalt his name," . . . *Isaac Watts, 1719.*

**Benediction.**

By REV. G. F. STANTON, of So. Weymouth.

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**Evening, at Seven and one-half o'clock.**

**Anthem.**

**Prayer.**

By REV. H. L. KELSEY, of Brockton.

**History of Music in this Society.**

By REV. ASA MANN, of Braintree.

During the reading of this Address, the music of different periods will be illustrated.

**The Ancient "Precinct," the Modern Parish, and the Town.**

By HON. J. WHITE BELCHER.

**Singing.**

"O God, our help in ages past," . . . *Isaac Watts, 1719.*

**Addresses.**

**Dorology.**

**Benediction.**

## Committees.

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### General Committee of Arrangements.

#### *Of the Church.*

J. C. LABAREE,  
JOSEPH GRAHAM,  
ROYAL T. MANN,  
GEORGE H. WILKINS.

#### *Of the Parish.*

J. WHITE BELCHER,  
ROYAL W. TURNER,  
JOHN LONG.

### On Hospitality.

JOHN V. BEAL,                      FRANCIS A. STANLEY,  
M. WALES BAKER.

### On Music.

DAVID BURRELL,                      WILLIAM PORTER,  
ALFRED W. WHITCOMB,              LYMAN F. BRACKETT,  
WINSLOW BATTLES,                  JOHN BERRY THAYER.

### On Printing.

J. C. LABAREE,                      GEORGE H. WILKINS,  
EDWARD N. LOVERING.

### On Finance.

GEORGE B. BRYANT,                  WILLIAM T. HAZARD,  
CHARLES E. PRATT.

**On Collation.**

DANIEL B. WHITE,	MRS. HORATIO B. ALDEN.
BENJAMIN BELCHER,	MRS. WALES HARRIS,
MRS. ISAAC NILES,	MRS. FRED. S. HOWARD,
MISS ELIZA F. BLAIR.	

**On Decoration.**

MISS ALICE M. TURNER,	MISS MARY LONG,
MISS LIZZIE S. BOWMAN.	

**On Publication.**

J. C. LABAREE,	GEORGE H. WILKINS,
JOSEPH GRAHAM,	JOHN V. BEAL,
ROYAL T. MANN,	J. WHITE BELCHER,
JOHN LONG.	

**On the Press.**

JONATHAN WALES,	FREDERICK L. BELCHER,
CHARLES G. HATHAWAY,	WESTON C. ALDEN,
DR. A. L. CHASE,	GEORGE H. NICHOLS,
WILLIAM T. HAZARD,	EMERSON A. LEACH.





## Historical Discourse.

BY REV. J. C. LABAREE.

*Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations : ask thy father, and he will shew thee ; thy elders, and they will tell thee. — DEUTERONOMY xxxii : 7.*

REVERENTLY and gratefully we welcome this anniversary day. We first lift our thankful hearts in praise to Him whose providence has protected, and whose Spirit has blessed, generation after generation of the fathers and sons who have worshiped here. We come to tell the simple story of their humble circumstances, their self-denying work, their manly virtues, their pure and steadfast faith, and the blessings of Heaven upon their labors.

In our effort to trace the stream of sacred influences to its source, we keenly feel the loss of one as our guide, whose birth was far up among the springs of the last century, and whose death has hidden from us much of the knowledge of our ancient times — the late Dr. Ebenezer Alden. The legacy of facts and sketches which Dr. Alden has left us alone renders it possible to touch with exactness many points in the imperfect narrative now presented. All the more do we miss the venerable patriarch, because illness has kept from our gathering to-day one of his honored sons, on whom we had depended for much of the profit and the fine flavor of this feast.

Far away among the romantic stories of an unreal life seem the beginnings of a Church on this hill one hundred and fifty years ago. Yet when this Church was organized, the Pilgrim

Church on Plymouth Rock had been planted one hundred and eleven years. Boston had just passed her first centennial. Towns and settlements had sprung up in every direction, and were pushing farther and farther into the wilderness. The Connecticut Valley was perhaps the boundary of Puritan civilization on the west. Not till 1732 was a stage-coach run between Boston and New York, and then only once a month, fourteen days being occupied in the journey. Brattleboro, Vt., and Concord, N. H., were the extreme and scarcely established posts toward the north. The Quaker City, which William Penn had founded only forty-nine years before, contained 10,000 people. New York was a city of 8,620 inhabitants, while the town of Boston was the largest place on the North American coast, having a population of more than 18,000. Massachusetts boasted of 120,000 souls, and 119 incorporated towns.

Within the Province 179 Churches of our order had already been gathered. Scattered over the remaining territory of New England, a hundred other Churches had begun to give light to the rising settlements. Of other denominations it may suffice to say: the Church of England had two Churches in Boston, and three elsewhere, one of which was in the north precinct of Braintree; three Baptist Churches had been gathered; a few Quaker meetings were held; and one French Protestant Church existed in Boston.

The one hundred and eightieth Congregational Church in Massachusetts was planted upon this hill. The region around was late in being settled. It was midway between Boston and Plymouth; its ownership was to some extent in dispute, and few water-courses or open meadows invited the early settler hither.

The town of Randolph is a part of the territory known of old as Braintree. From 1634 to 1640 it seems to have belonged to Boston, and while so connected, a branch of the First Church in Boston was granted to the settlers at the northern, or Quincy, portion of the district, October 18,



1636 (o. s.), and John Wheelwright was given the right to preach there. An independent existence as a Church was sought and granted; and the First Church in Braintree was organized September 17, 1639 (o. s.). It is that which now worships in the Old Stone Church in Quincy.

For sixty years families increased, and settlers pushed southward and up the little streams into the forests, until by the year 1706 seventy-one families — or one half of the population — had located south of the line which now divides Quincy from Braintree. By their request they were set off as a separate "precinct," in keeping with the custom of the times. A Church was organized September 10, 1707 (o. s.). And still the tide of settlement pressed farther to the south.

Just when the first clearing was made, where the first cabin was erected, or who had the honor of being the pioneer settler, within the limits of Randolph, has not yet been discovered. As early as 1640 land in this vicinity was granted by the General Court; but no settlements are believed to have been made during the seventeenth century. In 1708-11 a vast tract was subdivided; lots were assigned and deeds were executed, and evidence exists that soon afterward permanent settlements began to be numerous. As early as 1710 one saw-mill, possibly two, had been erected within our limits.

By the year 1727 many families had scattered themselves over this wide region, disputing their right to the soil with the wolf and the bear. Their humble homes were found along the "Cochato River" and "Tumbling Brook," on the east, and still farther on to the southeast; some of them in the west, and on the "Norroway" brook to the north; and their log cabins were hidden in the forest at intervals for two or three miles along this "country road to Bridgewater."

Extremely primitive and self-denying was their solitary life. By day and by night they were "in perils in the wilderness." But of all their many dangers and privations, one alone was put on record,—one only was to them so serious that we even hear the echo of their complaint to-day. It was their lack of

religious privileges, by reason of their distance from the house of God. The Sabbath-day journey to Braintree was long, often perilous, and in winter well-nigh impracticable; the only road, a path through the woods; their only method of travel, on foot or on horseback. Yet go they must, for they were Puritans; "it being as unnatural for a right New England man to live without an able ministry, as for a blacksmith to work his iron without a fire."

Twenty years after the formation of the Church, now known as the Congregational Church of Braintree, these scattered families had increased to "above forty in number," and they began to call for a precinct and a meeting-house, a minister, and even a township of their own. By the laws of the colony there could not be two Churches in one "precinct." No minister could be settled where there had been no precinct established, pledged to support preaching; and a precinct could not be set up, save by the authority of the General Court, and usually by consent also of the parish with whom the people had already been worshipping.

As early at least as the summer of 1727 the people had erected a meeting-house on this hill. In the autumn of the same year, the mother Society, pastor, Church, and precinct—to their honor be it spoken—gave unanimous consent, and very kind encouragement, to the proposed enterprise in this part of the town. The formal action of the old precinct determined also the line which should divide the parishes—a line which conforms very closely to the present boundary between Braintree and Randolph. With this cordial and very unusual indorsement of their plans, the next step was to petition the General Court for an act of incorporation as a distinct precinct, with all legal rights and privileges. Such a paper was presented to the Court by John Niles, Jr., "a principal inhabitant," and twenty-seven other residents. This ancient document, now one hundred and fifty-four years old, still exists in the archives of the State. As it is of much intrinsic interest, and seems not to have been seen or heard of for

generations, it may not be out of place to read portions of it on this occasion.\*

"The Petition of Diverse of the Inhabitants residing in the South End of the South Precinct in Braintry, in behalf of themselves, and of their Neighbours. South Braintry, December 28, 1727. Humbly Sheweth

"That your Petitioners, and others of our Neighbours who joyn with us, are labouring under difficult, and distressing circumstances, in regard of the remoteness of our Habitations from the Publick worship of God for several of us dwell at Such a distance therefrom, that we, with our families are forced to travail upon the Sabbath five miles, Some Six, Some Seven miles to a Meeting to hear the word preached, upon which consideration, That it might be less labour and more easie for us, we have been at the charge to Erect a Convenient House, and have set it in such a Suitable place (tho' not yet finished) as may very well accommodate the Neighborhood, for Such a Service. Also we have chosen persons to seek for a Suitable Minister to preach with us this Winter, this was done with the Advice and consent of our present Minister Mr. Niles, who has promised his assistance in this good work." . . .

"We remain and Subscribe our Selves your humble Servants :  
"John Niles, Samuel Pain, Benjamin Hayward, Thomas Fenton,  
"John French, Thomas Wales, William Linfield, David Eames,  
"Joseph Wales, James Bagley, David Niles, Ebenezer Niles, John  
"Nightingal, John Smith, Gideon Thayer, John Allen, Samuel Bagley, Will<sup>m</sup> Nightingal, Senr., James Penniman, Samuel Speer,  
"Moses Curtis, Jonathan Hayden, Ebenezer Copeland, Samuel  
"Bass, Alexander French, William Nightingal Junr., Nanthan<sup>l</sup> Belcher, Daniel Thayer."

This petition was presented in December, 1727, and on January 5-16, 1728, "the prayer of the petition" was granted. Whether they succeeded in obtaining "a suitable minister to preach with them that winter," we have no means of knowing, as the first leaves of the parish records are lost. From the

\* A fac-simile of this document will be found in the Appendix.

earliest pages left to us, it appears that preaching was secured at least during the autumn of the year 1728.

It was the custom in the early time for the parish to have a voice not only in choosing a pastor, but also in deciding who the candidates for that office should be. And the Committee could only engage such gentlemen to preach as had already been approved in parish meeting. It was the practice also to hire a candidate for three months, and then for the Church and parish to take action upon his case. In this way much time was consumed; some candidates failing to please the people, and others not inclining to accept the cordial invitations given them. Four dreary winters passed, and still the rude meeting-house had not echoed to the voice of the coming pastor. But the needy flock have not now long to wait. The records say:

"March ye 10 1731 Voted that Mr. Eaton be ye man to take "ye palloral care of this people." "Voted to give Mr Eaton "feventy pounds a year for two years and then rise five pounds a "year for two years, and then eighty pounds a year for his Sallary "as long as he carys on the work of ye Miniftry amongft us; in "money or Bills of Credit as Siluer money at Eighteen Shillings "an ounce. Voted that we will giue Mr. Eaton an Hundred and "fifty pounds in money for fettlement."

Mr. Eaton accepted the call. No Church organization, however, yet existed, the precinct having transacted all the business thus far. But when the Lord had sent them the pastor they had been searching for, steps were immediately taken to organize a Church.

At the founding of a Church the Puritans were accustomed to gather into it only a few well-known and reliable men, and to leave with them the responsibility of admitting others.

The First Church in Boston was formed with only four members, the Church in Quincy with eight, that in Braintree with ten. Seven was the favorite number in early times. Ten were admitted to this Church at its formation, the pastor-elect



being of the number. Not on the day of the ordination of the minister was this Church organized, although that was the usual mode of procedure.

It was on Friday, the 28th of May, 1731 (O. S.), or the 8th of June (N. S.), that the young pastor-elect and nine laymen here entered into solemn vows with God and with each other. (Very probably it was a day of special fasting and prayer with the good people. The First Church in Boston was organized on Friday, and it was observed as a fast-day.) This was the prominent and important act in the early history of the place. For this the meeting-house had been built; with reference to this the precinct had been granted; toward this every step of parish action had been directed. Other events may have been more interesting, and have seemed to be more essential and enduring. Few things, indeed, remain as they then were. The pastor that was ordained, where is he now? The precinct, so endowed with rights and powers like those of a town-meeting, is not now what it was. The town itself is no longer the Braintree of old; the Province of Massachusetts Bay has passed through radical changes, and the sovereign power of England has utterly passed away from the soil. What else but the Church of Christ remains, in the letter and in the spirit, as it was that day? It contained as did nothing else the element of permanency. This, then, we look back upon as the central and representative event. Other things gather round it as children around their mother; but this is the chief figure in all the group.

The agreement to which the original members gave their heart and hand one hundred and fifty years ago to-day was a *covenant*, not a creed. The creed of the Churches was contained in the Westminster Catechism, and, still further, in the Confession of Faith adopted by the Synod of the Churches of Massachusetts, at Cambridge, in 1680. All the Churches of the Congregational order were presumed to accept those declarations, and the people then, with few exceptions, were

one in doctrine. The individual Churches, therefore, had no other creed, and needed none. Accepting the established standards as a matter of course, they only covenanted in public to serve the Lord, and walk together according to the Scriptures and the order of the Churches.

The Covenant\* which was adopted and signed was a full and tender expression of their deep humiliation before God, their grateful and complete dependence on Jesus Christ as their only hope of salvation, their indispensable obligations to lead a holy life, and their entire consecration to the service and glory of God, and his kingdom on earth; and they closed their solemn contract with Heaven and with each other, saying: "And all this we do, flying to the blood of the everlasting Covenant for the pardon of all our sins, and praying that the glorious Lord who is the great Shepherd would prepare and strengthen us to every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." This Covenant was signed by Elisha Eaton, pastor, John Niles, Moses Curtis, John Niles, William Copeland, Thomas Wales, David Eames, Samuel Bass, Joseph White, David Slone.

So it was that "in the name of the Lord they set up their banners." They "despised not the day of small things;" but cast in "a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon."

After the Church was organized, five days intervened, and then, on Wednesday, June 2d, the young pastor was ordained. The leaf in the parish records which should contain an account of this important event is wanting. The following item in *The Boston News-Letter* for June 10, 1731, has very recently been found, and gives us all the information we yet have concerning the ordination of our first pastor:

\* The full Covenant is given in the Appendix.

*"Braintree, Third Precinct, June 2, 1731.*

"A church has been lately gathered in this Parish, and the Rev. "Mr. Elisha Eaton was this Day Ordained the Pastor of it. The "Rev. Mr. Paine of Weymouth began with Prayer, The Rev. Mr. "Lewis of Pembroke preach'd from 1 Cor. ix. 27. *Lest that by any "means when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a cast-away.* The Rev. Mr. Niles of Braintree gave the Charge, and "the Rev. Mr. Gay of Hingham the Fellowship of the Churches."

Rev. Elisha Eaton was from Taunton, and is believed to have descended from the Eatons of Plymouth. He graduated at Harvard College in 1729. When called to this Church he was styled "school-master," and tradition says he sometimes taught the winter school in this parish.

He married Mrs. Katherine Clough, of Boston, daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Belcher, of Braintree. He bought a house and thirty acres of land of Jonathan Hayden in 1732 for £200. The building has long since disappeared. Its location, however, is believed to have been on the west side of North Street, near the old cemetery, where Charles Holbrook now lives. There was the first pastor's home for nearly twenty years. There six children were born, of whom Samuel, the second son, became a minister, succeeded his father in his second parish, and was a man of wide influence.

The circumstances and period in which Mr. Eaton entered upon his work here offered great discouragements. "Above forty families," or more than two hundred souls, were at once placed under his charge. They were scattered over a wide territory. To many a cabin he must find his way by uncertain footpaths, and trees marked by the ax. Books were few, schools were poor, and within reach of many were not kept at all. The political state of the country was disturbed, and the religious condition worse. It was a period of sad religious decline, soon to be followed, however, by the Great Awakening under Edwards in 1735, and Whitefield in 1740. The "Half-Way Covenant," which was in general use among the

churches, was a source of injury and trouble. As it was adopted by this Church, it demands a moment's notice, and for some, possibly, a word of explanation. In 1631 the General Court issued an order "that for the time to come none should be admitted to the freedom of the body politic but such as were church members." To relieve those who were thus cut off from political privileges, it was declared by a general Synod of Churches, in 1662, that persons might be admitted to a nominal church membership, called "the Half-Way Covenant," and might have their children baptized, provided they had themselves been baptized in infancy, were not scandalous in life, and understood and accepted the doctrines of the churches. This system was from the very first adopted by this Church, as by all the sister churches, — "that most happy device," said the Rev. Dr. Storrs, "for filling up the Church with hypocrites and the world with infidels."

The plan was never very popular in this place, we are glad to notice; the admissions by this method being on the average only two for each year, or a total of one hundred and twenty-four for sixty years, the majority of which were females; after which we hear of it no more, or, as Dr. Alden states, "It was practically laid aside, although without a formal vote of the Church."

Tradition says that Rev. Mr. Eaton, and also the other ministers in Braintree, were not favorable to the preaching and the measures of Whitefield, when he was in the vicinity. This objection was occasioned, no doubt, by his natural conservatism, and not by any leaning to Arminian views, for he was regarded as thoroughly Calvinistic. The great Revivalist did not preach in either parish of Braintree, as he did in some of the neighboring towns with most happy results. This field, however, was not barren during those years of plenty to so many other churches.

The blessing of God was upon the efforts of the youthful preacher. The prayers of the people were answered, in part at least. Dr. Hitchcock, in his Century Sermon (a manu-

script of decided interest), says: "During the ministry of Rev. Mr. Eaton, in 1742, there was a great attention to religion in this place, and in the country generally. At that time the Spirit of God was poured out in abundant measure. A deep and anxious spirit of inquiry pervaded the people generally, and many were added to the Church." By the records we learn that during the years 1741-43 over forty persons were received into full communion; and during the entire ministry of Mr. Eaton one hundred and thirty united with the Church. It is fitting that we should do honor to-day to this good man, who labored long and faithfully for this Church. By his hand were laid those foundations upon which we stand, and his reward is with him.

Dr. Hitchcock testifies that "the impression which has descended from one generation to another respecting the character of Mr. Eaton is, that he was an able, exemplary, faithful, affectionate, and evangelical minister."

For nineteen years the first pastor continued his work here, and then voluntarily withdrew; his peace having been disturbed, and his usefulness to an extent impaired, by the idle talk of a person who "was judged by some to be crazy, and by some wicked." His labors with this Church closed June 7, 1750. He was afterwards settled at Harpswell, Me., where he died April 22, 1764.

The committee authorized to seek a minister after the dismission of Rev. Mr. Eaton was directed to obtain "an Orthodox minister." But why the necessity of such instructions? Were there any but Orthodox ministers in those days? Yes. Truth requires us to say that at this time from the oldest pulpit in the town were proclaimed new and erroneous doctrines by one who on that account was soon obliged to leave his own parish. He had caused much disturbance, however, in the vicinity.

One sermon especially excited animated discussion. After it had been preached in several pulpits, and most probably in this one, it was published. Very evidently it created a sensa-

tion in this parish, yet received no sympathy that we hear of. In reply to this famous sermon a discourse was preached before this people December 25, 1749, by Rev. John Porter, of the Fourth Church in Bridgewater (now the First Church in Brockton). Mr. Porter was an able and excellent man, a strong defender of the faith. His sermon met such a cordial response from this people that it was published; and on the title-page we read, "A Sermon preached at the South Precinct in Braintry, and published at the earnest desire of the hearers."

An "Attestation," or very strong indorsement, accompanies this discourse, signed by Elisha Eaton and four other names. A copy of this rare publication still survives (in the Congregational Library, Boston), to testify to the love of sound doctrine in the hearts of pastor and people, and explaining the injunction of the parish to its committee to obtain "an Orthodox minister."

After some differences, if not difficulties, in their choice, and certain ineffectual attempts to secure ministers upon whom they did agree, *Moses Taft*, of Mendon, was finally invited to carry on the work of the Gospel ministry. He accepted the call, and was ordained August 26, 1752. The parish records inform us that "Rev. Nathan Webb, of Uxbridge, began with prayer; Rev. John Shaw, of Bridgewater, preached the sermon; Rev. Samuel Niles, of this town, prayed while the hands were imposed, and gave the charge; Rev. Mr. Bailey, of Weymouth, gave the right hand of fellowship; and the whole was carried on in a decent, orderly manner, without any disturbance." The sermon was upon the text in Jeremiah iii: 15, and was published, together with the charge, the right hand of fellowship, and Rev. Mr. Taft's confession of faith, which was pronounced by the Council "worthy of imitation in these perilous times in like cases, as one proper expedient to prevent the further spread of errors in the land and defection in the churches."

This ordination sermon was the second published at the



request of this people, and, though now very rare, a copy may be found in the Massachusetts Historical Society Collection and one in the Library of Brown University. (For Mr. Taft's Confession of Faith, see Appendix.)

Mr. Taft was the shepherd of this flock longer than any other pastor. For thirty-nine years and three months he held his position, and then died in office November 11, 1791.

During the last years of his ministry, however, his health was very feeble, and a colleague was provided. His last sermon was preached on Thanksgiving Day, 1789. The pastorate of Mr. Taft covered the exciting and to some extent demoralizing period of the Revolution; and it may not be considered remarkable, perhaps, that less attention was paid to the subject of religion than in other years. There were, however, seasons of special awakening during this pastorate. About one hundred and fifteen were added to the Church under this ministry.

Said Rev. Dr. Hitchcock in his anniversary discourse, in 1827: "Mr. Taft is distinctly remembered by many now living. All whom I have heard speak of him have agreed in their testimony that he was a plain, honest-hearted, good man, exemplary in his conduct, and evangelical in his principles, though he was not thought to be so discriminating and clear as some of his brethren, and neither so argumentative as Paul, nor so eloquent as Apollos."

Rev. Mr. Taft was buried in the village cemetery. A tombstone has recently been placed over his grave, by the pious care and liberality of Dr. E. Alden.

While the venerable pastor was rapidly yielding to the infirmities of age, his pulpit was often supplied by ministers from abroad. Among these there came a young man upon whom the hearts of the people immediately centered as a suitable colleague for their aged father in the ministry. He came not as a candidate, but to offer friendly relief to the honored but enfeebled prophet of the Lord. His name was *Jonathan Strong*. His first sermon in this place was preached

June 1, 1788. He was at that time a youth not yet twenty-four years of age. Two years before, he had graduated at Dartmouth College, and "the close of his college life," we are told, "found him as intimately acquainted with theology as with the classics." A portion of the intervening years he had spent in teaching school, a part in studying theology with Rev. Ephraim Judson, of Taunton, and for three months he had preached in Attleboro, where he was cordially invited to settle. Declining the favorable call, Providence directed his steps to this, the Third Church in Braintree; and to-day we recognize the goodness of the Lord to this Church and people in introducing to them Jonathan Strong. A unanimous call was extended to him by Church and parish. His letter of acceptance was brief, tender, and cordial. He reserves for himself "a few Sabbaths to visit his friends;" and, as Dr. Hitchcock after him did the same, it is evident that for the last hundred years ministers' vacations have been the rule, in this parish at least, and probably are not anywhere such a novelty as some have supposed.

Jonathan Strong, the third pastor, was ordained January 28, 1789, as colleague with Rev. Mr. Taft. The sermon on the occasion was preached by the candidate's theological instructor, Rev. Ephraim Judson, of Taunton, and was published, with the charge, by Rev. John Porter, of Bridgewater, and the right hand of fellowship, by Rev. Ezra Weld, of Braintree.

By the kind providence of God, the ministry thus begun was continued for nearly twenty-six years.

Commencing his ministry as a young and unknown man, Jonathan Strong, of Randolph, soon became an eminent and honored divine in all this region. His labors here were a rich and immediate blessing to his parishioners; but the memory of such a pastor is a precious legacy to each succeeding generation. There are a few still with us who remember Dr. Strong as the minister of their youth, and who speak of him with the highest regard for his personal and Christian

character, and for the great work which he was enabled to do in the name of the Lord. One of the pupils who sat at his feet was our late Dr. Alden, who was prepared for college in the study of his pastor, and who remarks of him, "His ministrations were distinguished no less by the fervor, comprehensiveness, and pertinency of his prayers, than by his clear, logical, and impressive presentation of truth. As a preacher he commanded universal attention. His person was majestic, his eye clear and piercing; his deep, full voice had such power that its most suppressed tones could be heard by every individual in his audience. His first utterance in prayer made it manifest that he was holding communion with God; and as he proceeded his fellow-worshippers seemed to catch his spirit, and to become absorbed in the solemn duty in which they were engaged."

Rev. Dr. Storrs, of Braintree, in his biography of Dr. Strong, says of him: "He poured his whole heart into his public discourses." "If he did not despise the little graces of oratory, he did not court them. His object was to enlighten the understanding, convince the judgment, and move the affections of his audience. The style of his sermons was plain, argumentative, and forcible."

The recollection of a surviving pupil\* of Dr. Strong's early Latin class is that "the manuscript before him, in the pulpit, contained only the heads and leading thoughts of his discourse. As he preached he held in his left hand a little black Bible, the leaves of which he diligently turned, reading the references he had marked to sustain the arguments presented. Having laid down his points with care, he drew his spectacles from his face, and, swinging them in his hand by way of gesture, he brought home the truth with a directness and vigor that were not lost upon his hearers."

Dr. Strong was a doctrinal preacher. His commanding mind grappled naturally and closely with the profound prob-

\* Dr. Bradford L. Wales.

lems of religion, and he powerfully assailed the arguments of adversaries and teachers of error. All the churches of his day knew that he was a bold and faithful defender of evangelical religion.

His ministry was eminently a revival ministry. Three special periods of religious interest were enjoyed while he was pastor. Within two years after his settlement the first harvest season occurred. Over thirty were added to the Church. "This seasonable shower of divine grace imparted a new aspect to the whole Church and congregation. It confirmed the attachment that already existed between the young pastor and his people, and he regarded it as an earnest of abundant future harvests to be gathered in the same field." After eight years of quietness, a second revival bore witness to his faithful efforts, and during the years 1799 and 1800 fifty souls made profession of their hope in Christ. Following this refreshing came a period of much sowing and little reaping, and for eight years only ten names were added to the records. The third great revival was in 1812, and forty-one persons were gathered into the Church, one of whom—the last surviving convert under Dr. Strong's ministry—passed on to her eternal rest one month ago to-day. The entire number of additions to the Church under this able pastor was one hundred and seventy-six.

Dr. Strong was suddenly cut off in the midst of his days and his usefulness. He was but fifty years of age when, by a violent fever, he was summoned from his work and his loving people, who mourned for him with deep and lasting grief.

Dr. Hitchcock, who began his ministry in Randolph a few years after the death of Dr. Strong, gives his own impressions of the man: "I can truly say respecting him, The memory of the just is blessed. It has been the unanimous testimony of this people that he was a man eminent in abilities and wisdom, profound in argument, and energetic in action, a fearless defender of the truth as it is in Jesus, and a humble follower of the Lamb. The impression left on my own mind by his

posthumous reputation is, that his appearance and manner in the pulpit were eminently commanding and impressive. He was, as a social companion and friend, peculiarly adapted to attract and conciliate, in all respects endowed with the characteristics of a man of influence."

A very appreciative sketch of this able and honored minister was published in the *Panoplist*, November, 1816, from the pen of Rev. Dr. Storrs. But perhaps its several pages do not more eloquently set forth his virtues than the epitaph, written by the same hand, upon his tombstone, which stands in our cemetery:

"This monument is erected by an affectionate congregation in memory of the REV. JONATHAN STRONG, D.D., who died November 9, 1814, aged 50, having been pastor of the Church in Randolph twenty-six years.

"The urbanity of his manners, the vigor of his mind, the solidity of his judgment, the extent of his intellectual attainments, the purity of his faith, the fervor and affection of his public addresses, his zeal for God, his benevolence to man, will preserve him in the everlasting remembrance of his weeping family, his affectionate flock, and all who knew him.

"Our Fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?"

A full genealogical sketch of the Strong family is printed in connection with the sermon preached at the funeral of Mrs. Strong, by Rev. Calvin Hitchcock, D.D.

Seven occasional sermons by Rev. Dr. Strong were printed before his death.

As we glance at the period covered by the ministry of this honored pastor, we perceive at once the number and importance of the changes it witnessed. Its beginning was in the eighteenth century, and before the experiment of a federal government was fairly attempted; it terminated in the busy nineteenth, the government firmly established in the hearts of the people, and before the eyes of the nations.

At the first, the manners of a country people were often



homely, if not rude. It was then not unusual to see worthy men entering the sanctuary on a Sabbath-day in the farmer's frock of blue homespun; nor was it thought out of place to lay aside frock or coat, as the heat became oppressive. Economy in the matter of shoes and stockings, out of sight of the meeting-house, was very general; while disturbance from "the barefooted boy" in the gallery was no uncommon feature of Sabbath services. Even the dread of the officious tithing-man was not a guarantee against disorder. Persons are living who remember to have heard Dr. Strong call out in the midst of his sermon, "I wish I had a horsewhip to reach those boys!" And occasionally an obstinate offender was seized by the ruler of the galleries, marched down-stairs, up the broad aisle, and placed in the deacon's seat for safe keeping. Surely such manners were not brought far onward into the nineteenth century.

The changes in benevolent and missionary operations during the quarter of a century under review were very marked.

Benevolence as a Christian duty had never, indeed, been entirely forgotten. In the earliest months of parish existence, before Church or pastor had come to be, the contribution-box was one of the ornaments of the sanctuary, and one of the evidences of genuine piety among the humble worshipers. At the close of the services all the congregation were expected to come up to the man elected "to hold the box" before the pulpit, and there deposit their offerings in coin or chattels. Of these receipts a portion, from the earliest date of our records, was devoted to "the poor." This method of raising charitable funds remained in practice, Dr. Alden tells us, till near the time of the Revolutionary War. Larger gifts were not unknown even at so early a period. In 1784 Lieutenant Joshua Howard donated to the Church for a permanent fund the generous sum of fifty pounds sterling, for practical religious purposes. Organized benevolent operations were not, however, begun till the closing years of the century.

In May, 1799, the Massachusetts Missionary Society was



organized, Dr. Emmons, of Franklin, being chosen its first president, and Dr. Strong, of Randolph, one of its first directors. In support of this new agency, Female Cent Societies sprang up in many of our churches, and of course the "Ladies of Dr. Strong's Society" are among those whose early donations are acknowledged.

The organ of this benevolent society was *The Massachusetts Missionary Magazine*, commenced in 1803, and the first permanent religious periodical in the State. To this new monthly, which was no less than the beginning, under another name, of our now venerable *Missionary Herald*, Dr. Strong was an early and valued contributor.

And when in a few more years the awakening and rapidly extending spirit of missionary enterprise resulted in the formation of the American Board (1810), the pastor and people of this Church were deeply interested. On Wednesday, the 12th of February, 1812, a grand missionary meeting was held here in Dr. Strong's Church, to express and develop sympathy with five young men who had been ordained the week before at Salem — the first missionaries to the heathen world which the American churches had sent out. From the influences thus exerted upon them, it is natural that the people of this Church and parish should have early cherished a deep interest in the work of Foreign Missions.

These and other kindred societies and institutions, organized about this time, were born of the thoroughly awakened religious spirit that followed the great dearth of interest during the period succeeding the Revolution. It was a revival era. The Lord greatly blessed the churches with increase of spiritual strength, yet He suffered them to be shaken to their very foundations by what is known in our ecclesiastical history as the Unitarian defection. This Church was not rent asunder nor divided in sentiment by that controversy. Not, however, without sincere gratitude and thanksgiving for our own escape can we pass by that eventful period during which so many sister churches were suffering for their steadfast

faith. Not with indifference, but in utmost sympathy, did this people watch the great disruption. They welcomed the undivided gospel that was proclaimed to them with great power. They were blessed with revivals, and were firmly established in the truth; and had great reason to rejoice, and did rejoice, that the Lord had given them such a pastor to guide the Church in such a storm.

Another change in Dr. Strong's ministry, which deserves a passing allusion, was the introduction for the first time of the simple reading of the Scriptures as a part of the public services of the Sabbath day.

The Puritans, some of you need not be reminded, never allowed the Bible to be read, as we now read it in our churches, without note or comment. This they called "dumb reading," and would have none of it. Their objections were that it did not "give the sense," was likely to sink into a mere form, and savored too much of the hollow ceremonials, as they deemed them, of the Church of England and of the Papacy. Scripture was therefore never read before the people, unless it was fully expounded, verse by verse. This custom of the exposition of a chapter in the morning service was no doubt an essential part of the minister's duty in the early times. In later years it seems to have fallen out of use, and reading of Scripture was entirely omitted.

In 1813 the large Bible (now open before us) was purchased by subscription for pulpit use; and a note in the Church records of that year, by Dr. Alden, informs us that "Dr. Strong read from the new Bible once only—viz., 2 Pet. chap. i—and this was the commencement of reading the Bible as a part of public worship in this place."

Rev. Thaddeus Pomeroy, the fourth pastor, was ordained November 22, 1815. The services of ordination were as follows:

Introductory prayer, by Rev. Jonathan Curtis, of Epsom, N. H.; sermon, by Rev. Vincent Gould, of Southampton; ordaining prayer, by Rev. Dr. Morse, of Charlestown; charge to the

pastor, by Rev. Holland Weeks, of Abington; right hand of fellowship, by Rev. R. S. Storrs, of Braintree; charge to the people, by Rev. Joshua Bates, of Dedham; prayer, by Rev. Samuel Gile, of Milton. The religious papers of the day add to the above that "the exercises were peculiarly appropriate, and gave the highest satisfaction to a very numerous and attentive audience."

Mr. Pomeroy remained but five years, and was dismissed April 26, 1820, thirty persons having been added to the Church. During this brief ministry events of importance transpired. December 15, 1818, forty members of the Church, including its two deacons, William Linfield and Silas Paine, were dismissed to form the Second Church of Randolph, on the east side of the town (now Holbrook). The loss was very seriously felt, the membership being reduced to only seventy-eight.

In the year following, the Baptist Church in this town was formed (November 3, 1819). A few of the congregation withdrew to join in this new enterprise, although the largest portion of the new Church had been worshiping with the Baptist Church in East Stoughton. The sympathy extended to that new Society was by no means equal to what it should have been, nor to that with which we most heartily welcome its pastor, and so many of its members, to engage with us in the services of this occasion. The Church looked around upon its thinned and weakened ranks with something of discouragement. A day of fasting and prayer was observed, in which Church and parish united. Rev. Mr. Perkins, of Weymouth Landing, preached in the morning, Rev. Mr. Huntington, of North Bridgewater, in the afternoon. The Lord answered the humble and united prayers. Signs of encouragement appeared. The afflicted but harmonious Church rose up and went forward in the strength of the Lord.

It was during the ministry of Mr. Pomeroy that a young man joined the Church who has exerted greater influence for its welfare than any other layman of his generation. His

name was Ebenezer Alden. He came into the Church at a time when the Lord had a special need of him. I pause now only to speak of his first great work, the founding of the Sabbath school. This institution, which has developed here and elsewhere into so great a power, was established on the first Sabbath in May, 1819.

Mr. Pomeroy was dismissed on the 26th of April of the following year, and in a few months a unanimous call was extended to Rev. Calvin Hitchcock to assume the pastorate of the Church. On the 28th of February, 1821, he was duly installed. The installation sermon was preached by Rev. Warren Fay, of Charlestown. It was afterwards printed, together with the charge, by Rev. John Codman, of Dorchester, and the right hand of fellowship, by Rev. David Brigham, of the Second Church, Randolph.

The circumstances under which Dr. Hitchcock began his ministry were not especially flattering. But the Lord had not forgotten his people. He had sent them an "able minister of the New Testament."

The most powerful revival of religion that has ever been enjoyed by this Church was that of 1823, two years after hands had been laid upon their new pastor. A few persons still live to tell us of the depth and thoroughness of that work of grace as it swept through this community. Seventy-eight persons made a profession of religion in a single year.

Those who were then gathered in gave the Church a great increase of character for a generation, and its prosperity for the succeeding years was very marked. Other seasons of awakening were witnessed, especially in 1832 and 1842, when thirty and twenty-four additions were made. The Church grew and multiplied under the guiding hand of its able and devoted pastor.

Dr. Hitchcock was spared to be the under-shepherd of the people for thirty years. Full of usefulness was his long ministry. His preaching was thoroughly evangelical. He realized the overpowering importance of the truths of religion,

and he earnestly desired his people should feel them too. His sermons were clear in statement, happy in the blending of the doctrinal and practical, and oftentimes were peculiarly impressive. He could fasten a truth upon the mind of his hearers so that a score of years should not dim the freshness of it. In expounding the Scriptures he was perhaps especially at home; and his Sabbath evening services, which partook of that nature, are still recalled with pleasure and profit by many among us. His prayers were peculiarly helpful and appropriate. As a pastor he was full of humor and pleasantry, yet maintained careful watch over the souls of both old and young. He was faithful in pressing the neglected claims of the dying Saviour, jealous of his Master's honor, and delighted by nothing so much as the cry of the penitent, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

His early and earnest efforts in behalf of temperance should not be forgotten. He, with Dr. Alden, and others who still live among us, were early advocates of this great reformation.

As a counselor his judicious advice was continually sought by surrounding churches; and throughout the county, as among his own beloved people, his name was held in affection and honor till his death. At the age of sixty-four he voluntarily retired from the ministry, and resided in Wrentham till, at the ripe age of eighty years, he was called to his reward.

Five of Dr. Hitchcock's sermons were published; and an historical discourse on the centennial anniversary of the organization of the parish — though not given to the press — contains matters of much interest, portions of which have already been introduced into this address.

Leaving the venerated name of Dr. Hitchcock, we are at once in well-known waters, and seem quite near home. So may we quicken sail. The sixth minister given to this Church was Rev. Christopher M. Cordley. He was born under the shadows of the classic towers of old Oxford, England. He came to this country, however, when a lad, and his *alma mater* was our own Western Reserve College. He was ordained in



Hopkinton, N. H., in 1849, and was installed in Randolph March 3, 1852.

It was apparent that the Church needed a fresh infusion of youthful energy. Mr. Cordley brought new life, with vigorous and independent ways. He was a man of scholarly tastes, a diligent student of the New Testament in its original language, and was regarded by some of his seminary classmates as the foremost man among his fellows for mental acuteness and originality. He entered upon his ministry here with zeal and devotion. After six years of earnest labor, the wisdom of his remaining longer was debated by some, and he soon left for other fields of usefulness. He died in Lawrence, Mass., while pastor of the Central Church, June 26, 1866. Prof. Park preached the funeral sermon, and a biographical sketch was published from the pen of the late Dr. Blanchard, of Lowell.

Still more brief was the next, and seventh, pastorate — that of Rev. Henry E. Dwight, who was ordained December 29, 1859, and who remained but a little more than two years. His resignation took effect April 1, 1862. Twenty-two persons were added to the Church while Mr. Dwight was in charge. During his work here the Thursday weekly prayer-meeting was changed from afternoon to evening. Previously there had been no week-day evening meetings except in the out-districts of the parish, or during seasons of religious interest. The present meeting-house was erected during the early part of Mr. Dwight's ministry.

The eighth and present pastor was installed December 14, 1865. Since that date fifteen years and a half have quickly flown. Many mercies have been brought us from the Lord, yet with unfeigned sorrow we humble ourselves in view of the lack of that abundant fruit it would be our delight, as it has surely been our duty, to gather for the Master.

Peace and harmony have prevailed, the same old truths of the Everlasting Word have been held forth, and some seasons of refreshing have been experienced; one, of special import-



ance, in 1874, reached the hearts of many of our youth, and in that year there were thirty-one persons added to the Church.

The entire number received to our fellowship during these fifteen years is ninety-seven, making a total of eight hundred and three members of the Church since its foundation.

Something should be said regarding those important officers in the Christian Church, the deacons. As the Church has had only eight pastors, so has it set apart but seventeen deacons, or two for each minister, and one to spare.

Of all the deceased who have held this honorable position Dr. Alden has left a record in a paper read before the Church in 1861. From this valuable series of sketches a few notes from the more prominent must suffice.

Deacon *Thomas Wales* is the first upon the list. He was one of fifteen children born to Elder Nathaniel Wales, the last individual set apart as elder (in distinction from deacon) in the old First Church in Braintree (now Quincy). Deacon Thomas Wales was born in 1695, and, accordingly, when this Church was organized he was only thirty-six years of age, and for two years was its only deacon. "As his father, so he also had fifteen children. He died in 1775, aged eighty years. He was a substantial farmer, captain in the militia, a friend of law and order, and commanded universal respect. His home was south of the town, on the road leading from Main Street to Stoughton."

*Samuel Bass*, second in the line of deacons, "was great-grandson of Samuel Bass, deacon in the First Church in Roxbury, and in 1640 deacon of the original Braintree Church. He was also great-grandson of John Alden, the Plymouth Pilgrim. He was a man of sterling integrity, was much esteemed, and is supposed to have been leader of the singing in the olden days." He was born in 1700, elected deacon in 1733, and died in 1768.

*Peter Thayer* was chosen to succeed Deacon Bass. "He was a man of ardent feelings and deep piety, earnest, enthusiastic, sympathizing far more than his predecessors in office

with the 'new lights' of that day" (that is, with revivals and the "new measures" to which they gave rise). "His wife," says the same writer from whom I have been quoting, "was Anna Porter, from Norton — calm, quiet, meditative, gentle, a matron of the olden time, plying the loom and the distaff, and guiding well her household — just such a wife as her husband needed." Deacon Thayer removed to Peterboro, N. H., in 1781.

Coming down a little later, we find *Samuel Allen*, the seventh deacon. Deacon Allen married a daughter of Rev. Moses Taft, and a brother of his became a clergyman, and was settled in Bradford, Mass., at the time of the formation of the American Board in that place in 1810. Deacon Allen is remembered by some now living. During the intermission on Sabbath day he was accustomed to read aloud, from his deacon's seat, the works of John Flavel, while the people who had brought their luncheons with them sat around in different parts of the meeting-house, feeding body and soul at the same instant. The ancient and ample volume from which it is believed the good deacon used to edify the people is still preserved in excellent condition. Deacon Allen was born in 1760, was elected deacon in 1792, removed to Easton in 1814, and died in 1815.

Deacons *William Linfield* and *Silas Paine* were in succession the officers from the east village. "Deacon Paine was son of Nathaniel, grandson of Benjamin — 'all good men and true.' He was distinguished for his sound sense and uncompromising orthodoxy."

Deacon *Elisha Mann* was the ninth deacon — a firm and faithful servant of God, honoring the office he filled, and living to see nearly all of his eleven children walking in his footsteps. "He was a descendant in the fifth generation," says Dr. Alden, "from Richard Mann, planter, of Scituate. His residence was at the west corner. He married Abigail Whitcomb, daughter of Lieut. Jacob Whitcomb. She, with the wife of her brother-in-law, Mrs. Jane Mann, and her hus-

band's sister, Mrs. Sarah White, maintained for many years a weekly female prayer-meeting; thus, while keeping the fire of holy love burning brightly on the altar of their own hearts, they were also diffusing all around them a holy influence which even at this day is not extinct."

Since I came among this people, often have I heard the names of two deacons whose memory still lingers in many a heart as a precious and healthful inheritance of former days — the names of *Asa Thayer* and *Wales Thayer*; and with them is also associated Deacon *Ephraim Wales*. The Church was richly blessed by the prayers and services of these humble and devout men of God. An illustrative incident of Deacon Asa Thayer is given. In his neighborhood there lived a worthless, daring fellow (whether he had ever heard of John Knox and Queen Mary is not reported) who was accustomed to say, "I am afraid of nothing but Deacon Asa's prayers." Of the two last named, Dr. Alden printed a biographical sketch, which very justly sets forth their excellences of mind and heart. Speaking of them, in the paper before me, he says: "They were men of mind as well as piety, easily discriminating between sense and sound, an essay and a sermon, declamation and pulpit oratory, the truth as it is in Jesus and philosophy falsely so called." Both of these honored office-bearers were cut off within one six months, and deep was the affliction of the Church in parting with deacons who had such honor among men and so much faith in God.

Succeeding these beloved brethren came two with whom we have all been well acquainted — Deacons *Ephraim Belcher* and *Adoniram Judson Mann*. The former has this year finished his earthly course with joy. He died in a good old age, after a life of great activity, but never ceasing to feel a lively interest in the spiritual welfare of the Church, and ever longing and praying for the conversion of the young, for whom he always seemed especially concerned. His companion in office, Deacon A. J. Mann, still survives, the oldest living member of

our Church who has held office; himself the son of Deacon Elisha Mann, already mentioned.

The list is completed by the addition of the names of Deacon *Oliver H. Leach* (recently retired) and Deacon *Joseph Graham*, both elected in 1865, and Deacon *Royal T. Mann*, chosen in 1878.

But eight ministers and seventeen deacons do not comprise all of the garrison of the Lord's host in this place for a century and a half. However faithfully these may have done their part, a bright, and possibly a brighter, record may be given to some in less conspicuous positions. Other hearts may have been filled with equal zeal and faith and self-denial, other examples as worthy of mention. Many of them will never be remembered for their true worth—humble, lowly men and women, who lived nobly but died obscurely. As silver dollars cast into the molten furnace are wholly lost to sight, and yet are said to add a peculiar richness to the tone of the bell that is casting, and which for generations may fill the air with melody, so has many a precious character contributed unseen strength and beauty to the influences which are to-day refining the hearts of this people.

In the matter of benevolent gifts, for example, it is a pleasant recollection that in the first list of churches that contributed as such to the American Board, this Church is found credited with \$58.56; yet is it not more interesting to learn that the first money contributed to the monthly concert collections was a sixpence brought to Dr. Alden by the hand of a poor woman?

Even in the field of direct religious effort and influence, can human eye always detect the most efficient agency? If we think of men, the Lord may especially trace results to the faithful mothers in Israel. We may honor ministers; He may have even more regard to humble laymen. Our praise may be upon the preaching, while God is blessing the praying ones.

The records of this Church have many a page devoted to

councils, fast-days, Church-meetings, etc., but they say nothing of that weekly female prayer-meeting long held at the *West Corner*. All have gone home who were prominent in that little circle; but the records of the Church above alone preserve the measure of holy influence exerted by that cluster of saintly women upon the hearts of mothers who still love to meet and pray, or upon the female piety of the Church for years to come. We hear of faithful ministers, great sermons, and powerful revivals; yet one of the principal revivals in Dr. Strong's day (that in 1812), Dr. Alden somewhere informs us, "had its origin, apparently, in the faithfulness of a teacher in a female school." Who has not known of Dr. Strong as a man of great gifts and piety? but how many have heard of this humble school-teacher who sowed such seed among us?

True to the old Puritan instinct, this Church has always encouraged her youth to seek a good education. This parish, as you will hear this evening more particularly, managed the schools of the precinct for over sixty years. At a later period an academy was established (March 25, 1833). Dr. Hitchcock was president of the board of trustees. Baptist families united heartily with our own in its support. The religious no less than the literary influence of the old Randolph Academy was most beneficial upon our youth during the several years of its flourishing existence. Those gala-days when the annual exhibitions were held in the old meeting-house, and young men in all the glow of graduation day came here to "speak their pieces," proved how closely the Church and school are united in the hearts of an intelligent Christian community. It was a great loss to the best interests of our young people when Randolph Academy was suffered to decline, and the presence of such teachers as Rev. Isaac Wetherell, Rev. L. F. Clark, Rev. G. P. Smith, Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Poor, and Rev. Dr. Gulliver was no longer felt among us.

We have considered the ministers and officers who have been standard-bearers, and others who have been faithful soldiers in this army of the Lord. But the work of a Church is

not measured by what it has done at home. Are there none who, having enlisted here, have been taught and trained, and then sent to other portions of the wide field? This Church has called to its aid from other towns eight ministers. How has it, meanwhile, paid back this debt? In answer to this inquiry we are enabled to say that, in return for the eight received, it has raised up at least twenty-one ministers of the gospel. Their names should find a place in such a record as this. They are as follows:

*Samuel Eaton*, son of Rev. Elisha Eaton, born in this place in 1737. He was graduated at Harvard College, 1763, and settled in Harpswell, Me., and was one of the most influential clergymen of a wide section of that State. His biography is written in Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*; died in 1822.

*Micaiah Porter*, son of Benjamin and Mary (Dorman); born, 1745; admitted to Church, 1767, age 22; graduated, 1775; ordained at Voluntown, Ct.; remained there, 1781-1800; installed at Plainfield, N. H., 1805, July 16th; died, September 4, 1829, aged 84.

*Rev. Jonathan Allen*, son of Isaac and Deborah Allen, brother of Deacon Samuel Allen; born, 1751; admitted to church, 1767, age 16; graduated at Harvard, 1774; ordained, June 5, 1781, at Bradford; died, March 6, 1827. His only daughter, Eliza, became the first wife of Thomas A. Merrill, D.D., of Middlebury, Vt., a distinguished minister, who in college life bore off the class honors from Daniel Webster in Dartmouth College, and who in later years was the father of the Vermont ministry.

*Jabez Thayer*, son of Deacon Peter Thayer; born, 1749; admitted to Church, 1776, age 27; graduated at Brown University, 1776; studied divinity, but died in 1779, April 10th, aged 30 years, and was never settled.

*Eleazar Taft*, son of Rev. Moses Taft and his wife Mary (Dorr); born, 1755, October 11th; graduated at Harvard College, 1783; studied with Dr. Emmons, of Franklin; preached



at Langdon, N. H.; was never ordained; became a teacher, and died at Exeter, N. H., June 4, 1834.

*Phineas Taft*, son also of Rev. Moses Taft; born, 1762; graduated at Harvard College, 1789; admitted to Church, 1791, age 29; studied divinity with Dr. Jonathan Strong. Was a young man of great promise, but died early (1798, February), never having been settled.

*John Turner*, son of Colonel Seth and Rebecca (Vinton) Turner; born, November 4, 1769; admitted to Church, 1789, age 20; graduated at Brown University, 1788; settled in Biddeford, Me.; died, October 2, 1839.

*Joshua Bradley*, son of Hopestill Bradley; born, 1771; was fitted for college under Dr. Strong; graduated at Brown University, 1799. He became pastor of the Baptist Church in Newport, R. I., and died at St. Paul, Minn., November 22, 1855, aged 84. From a notice of Mr. Bradley, copied into the *New York Observer* from the *Christian Secretary*, and preserved by Dr. Alden, we learn that "within the course of a long ministry he devoted much attention to *religious* popular education, and traveled through seventeen States and some of the Territories, laboring in this his chosen work. Seventeen schools and academies, of some importance, owe their existence directly or indirectly to his efforts. Many indigent young men were helped to an education and preparation for the ministry by him, and everywhere he went the gospel was preached faithfully and earnestly. He has been superintendent of public instruction in Minnesota and pastor of the Baptist Church in St. Paul. Some sixty-five years he labored for the best good of his fellow-men, and the amount of good accomplished is untold." He was long known as "Father Bradley." Few men, it is believed, have struggled more successfully with adverse circumstances, or better accomplished the great work of life.

*Fabez Porter*, son of Joshua, Jr., and Rachel (Thayer) Porter; born, 1792; admitted to Church, 1812, at the age of 20;

graduated at Brown University, 1818; died at Quincy, Ill., 1830.

*Rev. Levi White*, son of Captain John W. and Ruth (Thayer) White; born, March 4, 1771; admitted to the Church, 1791, at the age of 20; graduated at Dartmouth, 1796; settled in Sandisfield; died in 1836.

*Rev. Jonathan Curtis*, son of Jonathan and Eunice (Thayer), and grandson of Moses C., one of the original members of the Church. He was born October 22, 1786; graduated at Dartmouth College, 1811. While obtaining an education he sustained himself almost entirely by his own efforts. "His mother," says Dr. Alden, "encouraged his plans with Christian sympathy and faith, and said, in substance if not in the precise words of the mother of Increase Mather, 'Child, if God make thee a good Christian and a good scholar, thou hast all thy mother ever asked for thee.'" Was tutor in Dartmouth College, 1814-15. He was ordained in Epsom, N. H., February 22, 1815; remained there till 1825; settled in Sharon, 1825-1834; Pittsfield, N. H., 1834-1845; also in Woodstock, Ct.; died, January 27, 1861.

*Samuel White*, son of Solomon and Rhoda (Braman) White; born, October 12, 1791; admitted to the Church at age of 13; graduated at Dartmouth College, 1812; ordained at Williamson, N. Y., February 24, 1818; pastor of Presbyterian churches in the State of New York; died, June 9, 1864.

*Elipha White*, son of Caleb White; born, 1795; admitted to Church at the age of 18; graduated at Brown University, 1817; pastor at John's Island, S. C.; ordained, January 3, 1821; died, November 20, 1849.

*Rev. Charles White, D.D.*, younger brother of Samuel; born, 1795; graduated at Dartmouth College, 1821; ordained at Thetford, Vt., January 5, 1825, as colleague with his stepfather, Rev. Dr. Burton; President of Wabash College for twenty years; died, October 29, 1861.

*Rev. Willard Pierce*; born, 1790; admitted to Church, 1812; did not graduate; was settled in Foxboro, and in North

Abington; a volume of his sermons was published in 1854; died, March 26, 1860.

*Josiah L. Arms*, son of Josiah L. and Mary (Trask) Arms; admitted to Church, 1832, at the age of 21; not a graduate; ordained at South Plymouth, 1847; preached in Woodstock, Ct.

*Henry T. Lothrop*, son of Barnabas and Clara (Holbrook) Lothrop; born, March 6, 1823; admitted to Church, 1836, at the age of 13; graduated at Amherst College, 1844; settled at Palmyra, Wis., 1850.

*Robert S. Hitchcock*, son of Rev. Dr. Hitchcock; graduated at Amherst College, 1837; was pastor at East Boston, at New Bedford, and at Baltimore, Md.

*Ebenezer Alden, Jr.*, son of Dr. Ebenezer Alden; admitted to Church in Amherst College in 1836, at the age of 16; united by letter with Church at Randolph in 1839; graduated at Amherst College, 1839; ordained at Denmark, Iowa, in 1843; was one of the "Iowa Band;" afterward settled in Marshfield in 1850.

*Asa Mann*, son of Deacon Elisha and Abigail (Whitcomb) Mann; born, 1816; admitted to Church, 1832, at the age of 16; graduated at Amherst College, 1838; at Andover, 1842; ordained at Hardwick, June 19, 1844.

*Edmund K. Alden*, son of Dr. Ebenezer Alden; admitted to Church, 1836, at the age of 11; graduated at Amherst College, 1844; ordained, January 2, 1850, at Yarmouth, Me.; settled in Lenox, 1854; at South Boston, 1859-1876; now Secretary of the American Board.

Six of the twenty-one persons whose names are thus recorded were not actually members of this Church, but were directly connected with the congregation, and received their earliest impressions under the care of this Church.

In addition to those who have chosen the ministry as their profession, the following persons have received a liberal education:

*Ephraim Wales, M.D.*, son of Deacon Thomas Wales (by

his second wife, widow Sarah Belcher); born, May 9, 1746; graduated at Harvard College, 1768; died, 1805.

*Moses Taft, Jr., M.D.*, son of Rev. Moses Taft; born, June 10, 1854; graduated at Harvard, 1774; resided in Sudbury; died, 1799, July 22.

*Samuel Bass*, son of Jonathan and Susanna (Belcher) Bass; born, 1757; graduated at Harvard, 1782; died, 1842.

*Joseph Taft, M.D.*, son of Rev. Moses Taft; born August 15, 1757; graduated at Harvard, 1783; resided in Sudbury; died in Randolph, 1824, January.

*Benjamin Turner, M.D.*, son of Colonel Seth and Rebecca (Vinton) Turner; born September 22, 1764; graduated at Harvard, 1791; resided in Milton; died, 1831.

*Thomas Beale Wales*, son of preceding; graduated at Harvard College, 1795; died, 1853; a merchant in Boston.

*Jonathan Bass*, son of Samuel and Sarah (Lawrence) Bass; born, 1784; graduated at Harvard, 1804.

*Ebenezer Alden, M.D.*, son of Dr. Ebenezer Alden; born, March 17, 1788; graduated at Harvard, 1808; died, January 26, 1881.

*Henry B. Alden*, brother of preceding; born, 1791, June 7th; graduated at Harvard, 1812; died, 1851, June 24th.

*Royal Turner, Col.*, son of Seth and Abigail (Wales) Turner; born, 1792; graduated at Harvard, 1813; died, December 31, 1862.

*George O. Strong*, son of Dr. Jonathan Strong and Joanna (Odiorne) Strong; born, November 6, 1791; graduated at Brown University, 1814.

*Bradford L. Wales, M.D.*, son of Dr. Jonathan and Fanny (Cobb) Wales; born May 1, 1804; graduated at Middlebury College, 1824.

*Benjamin Mann, M.D.*, son of John and Jane (Tucker) Mann; born, 1814; graduated at Amherst College, 1837.

*Jonathan Mann, M.D.*, brother of preceding; born, 1816; entered Amherst College, but was prevented from graduating by ill health.

*Horatio B. Alden*, son of Horatio B. and Mary (Belcher) Alden ; graduated at Yale College, 1842.

*John King, Esq.*, son of John and Sarah W. (Turner) King ; graduated at Harvard College, 1839.

*Thomas B. Wales, M.D.*, son of Dr. Ephraim Wales ; graduated at Middlebury College, 1844.

*Joseph G. S. Hitchcock, M.D.*, son of Dr. Calvin Hitchcock ; graduated at Middlebury College, 1844.

*Jonathan Wales, Esq.*, son of Jonathan and Augusta (Bemis) Wales ; graduated at Yale College, 1871.

*George W. Dickerman*, son of Benjamin and Mary (Johnson) Dickerman ; to graduate at Harvard College, 1882.

To these may be added a list (incomplete, it is feared) of those who have acquired a thorough professional, though not collegiate, education :

*Augustine A. Mann, M.D.*, son of Alvan and Emeline R. (Mitchell) Mann ; graduated at Jefferson Medical College, 1860.

*John V. Beal, Esq.*, son of Eleazar and Mary (Thayer) Beal ; graduated at Harvard Law School, 1872.

*Henry W. Bradford, M.D.*, son of Charles and Abigail (Beal) Bradford ; graduated at Harvard Medical School, 1875.

*John Alden*, Chemist, son of Adoniram and Mary E. (Wentworth) Alden ; graduated at Boston Institute of Technology, 1877.

A roll of twenty-four educated men is here given, in addition to the twenty-one ministers — forty-five of all professions.

These records of personal worth and religious effort are among the most valuable a Church can preserve. He who has done more than all others to furnish these facts and reminiscences is no longer with us ; but he has shown throughout his long life how high an estimate he placed on the godly example of the fathers and mothers. He was especially careful of the aged. He gathered up their humble stories of faith and prayer, as he would morsels of gold. Not dearer to the heart of Walter Scott were the fragments of old Scottish

traditions. He wrote and printed brief memoirs of some of the prominent officers and members. A tender and glowing tribute is that which his pen has left to the character of *Samuel Whitcomb*, with whom he labored so long and happily in revivals and in neighborhood meetings. Other sketches are preserved, those of Deacon Ephraim Wales and Deacon Wales Thayer being especially valuable. For fifty-six years he was the thoughtful, methodical clerk of the Church, and knew more of our history, exactly and fully, than perhaps all others. In a series of historical papers on the early years of Church, parish, and town, he has given us the chief outlines of all future narratives. The circumstances and tastes of Dr. Alden were, indeed, particularly fortunate for such a service as he has rendered. Dying this year, at the great age of nearly ninety-three, his one life carries us back to a time when the Church was but fifty-seven years old, and he, as a bright lad of six years, may have attended the funeral of the last one of the ten original members of the Church.

But Dr. Alden was not only more careful than most men to preserve history: he did more than many to make history — history which will be written by other pens than his, both on earth and in heaven. He founded the Sabbath school, at a time when there were few who had faith and courage to take such a step. For thirty-nine years he was its honored superintendent, and for many years after a teacher, most useful and beloved. To the truth of the gospel he was ever loyal, and was wise and helpful in its exposition. He loved the house of God, the conference, and neighborhood meetings. The preparatory lecture and the sacramental table he welcomed with deep and unfeigned satisfaction. As the family was to him a sacred institution, so it was his constant effort to make it so to others; and the family altar was the most sacred of all family blessings. To the sick he came with healing in his hand and comfort in his heart; to the aged he was full of sympathy; to the young he gave counsel and wisdom. He



was first a child of the Church, then and long an active member, and then its venerated father.

With the death of this patriarch of the Church, this review of thrice fifty years must close. A sketch of the parish history will be given us this evening. It is appropriate, however, at this time, that the most cordial acknowledgment be made of the good work of the parish during these many years. The two organizations have labored side by side with utmost harmony and courtesy. The ability, liberality, and promptness with which the business of our Society has been conducted are thoroughly appreciated by the Church and pastor. All are happy to bear witness that the parish deserves the name it has received from those who know it best — "The model parish."

To whatever degree your patience has been taxed by this prolonged address, for myself I feel that the text has but just been pronounced, while the sermon remains all unspoken — a long text, indeed, yet would it be a poor one? From this humble verse in the grand chapter of New England Church history, what a series of impressive sermons may not the Spirit of God preach to us! One such discourse, I should think, would be entitled *The Advantages of a Pious and Intelligent Ancestry*. However great a privilege it may have been to Paul to build on no other man's foundation, it is no privilege to find one's home in a community where the cornerstone has not already been laid by men possessing a living faith in God's Word. It is a blessing to have a history — a decidedly Christian history — behind us. The foundations of this Church and town were set very modestly, but they were "built upon a rock." A century and a half has passed over them, yet they stand sure, and to-day need no resetting.

Has not the Spirit of the Lord something to say to us concerning *the priceless worth of a Christian Church* to all the highest interests of a village? Is there any such interest over which this Church has not watched with jealous care? Take

away from this people, if it were possible, all the good that has been secured, all the saving influences exerted, by this Church, and is it in the power of the mind to estimate the ignorance, the darkness, the immorality, and wretchedness into which we should instantly be plunged? The record proves that this Church has been a true friend of all that is really worthy and sacred to human welfare. It has freely opened the Bible, it hallows the Sabbath day, it cares for the young, it cherishes the free school and the college.

What a *thanksgiving sermon* the providence of God in our history is preaching to us! We rejoice that there have been no sad records of dissensions, divisions, and apostasy from the faith; that in perilous times the ship has weathered every storm, while many a one has been shattered or lost; that the ministers of this Church, varying widely in gifts and graces, have all been faithful to the grand truths of Christ's gospel. Our faith is still the faith of the Puritans. It is a true offshoot of the living vine which grew hard by Plymouth Rock. It has been tested, and we see to-day what sort of influences it creates. We stand by the faith of our fathers. There is nothing like it for the building up of villages and towns and States, for the sterling worth of human character, and for the kindling of the soul with highest aims. But we remember that in many things there has been true progress. Slavery once existed upon this soil, to a very limited extent and in the mildest form, indeed; yet, though our fathers tolerated slavery for a time, they also abolished it fifty years before England followed their example. So has there been progress in temperance, in education, in refinement of manners, in general knowledge, in charity.

We surely may find material for a sermon of stirring power to teach us that we are not standing to-day at the close of a completed work, well begun long years ago, so that our only duty now is grateful admiration. We have, indeed, reached the end of a period, but not the end of responsibility. We are in the midst of the battle yet. Not to put off, but to

gird on the armor anew, are we here to-day ; to do our work as well as the founders of this Church did theirs ; to serve God amid our privileges as humbly and zealously as did they in their poverty ; to make religion the chief aim of our lives ; to live for God and our fellow-men, and ask no man to praise us.

Rev. John Hancock, in his Century Sermon, in the year 1739, said : " It should be our great care to stand fast in the liberty of our fathers, and remember their great errand into this wilderness, which was the advancement of the glory of God and their own spiritual interest. Let us pursue this glorious design, and build on their foundation." To such a noble purpose let us consecrate ourselves anew.

NOTE. — A few paragraphs of the discourse were omitted in the reading, and a few items have since been added.

ROLL OF THE PASTORS OF THE CHURCH.

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ELISHA EATON. Ordained, June 13, 1731. Dismissed, June 7, 1750.

MOSES TAFT. Ordained, August 26, 1752. Died in office, November 12, 1791.

JONATHAN STRONG. Ordained, January 28, 1789. Died in office, November 9, 1814.

THADDEUS POMEROY. Installed, November 22, 1815. Dismissed, April 26, 1820.

CALVIN HITCHCOCK. Installed, February 28, 1821. Dismissed, June 9, 1851.

CHRISTOPHER M. CORDLEY. Installed, March 3, 1852. Dismissed, October 14, 1858.

HENRY E. DWIGHT. Ordained, December 29, 1859. Dismissed, April 1, 1862.

JOHN C. LABAREE. Installed, Dec. 14, 1865.

ROLL OF THE DEACONS OF THE CHURCH.

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THOMAS WALES . . . .	Elected, 1731.	Died, 1775.
SAMUEL BASS . . . . .	" 1733.	Died, 1768.
PETER THAYER . . . . .	" 1768.	Resigned, 1781.
JONATHAN WILD . . . . .	" 1768.	Died, 1794.
NATHANIEL WALES . . . .	" 1782.	Died, 1788.
WILLIAM LINFIELD, 3d .	" 1782.	Resigned, 1818.
SAMUEL ALLEN . . . . .	" 1788.	Resigned, 1814.
SILAS PAINE . . . . .	" 1814.	Resigned, 1818.
ELISHA MANN . . . . .	" 1819.	Resigned, 1841.
ASA THAYER . . . . .	" 1819.	Resigned, 1841.
EPHRAIM WALES . . . . .	" 1841.	Died, 1855.
WALES THAYER . . . . .	" 1841.	Resigned, 1855.
EPHRAIM BELCHER . . . .	" 1855.	Resigned, 1865.
ADONIRAM J. MANN . . .	" 1855.	Resigned, 1865.
OLIVER H. LEACH . . . .	" 1865.	Resigned, 1878.
JOSEPH GRAHAM . . . . .	" 1865.	
ROYAL T. MANN . . . . .	" 1878.	

## History of the Sabbath School.

BY REV. EBENEZER ALDEN.

THE history of this school is nearly parallel with the existence of the modern Sabbath school system in our American churches. Its origin was a part of a general movement, and its changes in methods of instruction, style of singing, the literary character of its library, and its accessories, such as meetings of teachers and concerts, have borne the impress of the general progress of the institution. The early part of this century was an era of revivals, and the dawn of missions, home and foreign. This spiritual quickening of the churches was a condition favorable to a renewed interest in the study of the Bible, and to the instruction of the young in divine truth, which took the form of the Sabbath school.

The preliminary step toward the organization of this school was taken in the year 1818, when Rev. Thaddeus Pomeroy, then pastor of this Church, having received from "The Boston Society for the Moral and Religious Instruction of the Poor" \* a circular, "setting forth the advantages of Sabbath schools, and recommending their introduction into all our parishes," placed it "in the hands of him who was afterward elected superintendent." Other brethren were consulted, the subject was brought before the Church at a regular meeting, and "subsequently a written statement of the design and plan of the proposed school, and of the method of conducting it, was, by request of the Church, submitted for considera-

\* Now bearing the name of "The City Missionary Society."



tion, which, after much discussion, and some misgivings on the part of the elderly members, was unanimously adopted."

"In February, 1819, the Church elected a superintendent and committee of supervision, who immediately entered upon their work of preparation by visiting families and individuals, endeavoring to remove prejudices and prepare the way for opening the school as soon as the season would admit of it. On the evening of April 26, 1819, the teachers held their first meeting to make necessary arrangements and to look to God for His blessing. On a beautiful spring morning, the first Sabbath in May, 1819, at the ringing of the first bell for public worship, there might have been seen coming up to the sanctuary from every quarter a goodly number of children, youth, and older persons, each with a Bible, hymn-book, or catechism, and each on their arrival reverently entering the house of God and taking seats that were assigned them. As the bell ceased to ring, at a signal given, in a few earnest words the object of the gathering was explained to be the social study of God's Word, with a view of learning his will and securing his blessing. The divine benediction was then invoked upon the enterprise by an aged disciple. . . . There were present at that first meeting ninety scholars and fourteen teachers, and during the season one hundred and nineteen scholars and twenty teachers. Each teacher was introduced to his class. Portions of Scripture, hymns, and answers from the catechism were repeated by the scholars and explained by the teachers. At the close of the session a short address was made to those present on the value of the Bible, especially to the young, and the services were concluded by singing to God's praise three verses of Dr. Watts's version of the 119th Psalm, 4th part: 'How shall the young secure their hearts?'"

These extracts from the address of the first superintendent on the fiftieth anniversary give a vivid description of the school substantially for its first six years while it occupied the church, with square pews well fitted for its purposes, each

teacher sitting in a chair in the middle of the pew, with his class around him. That old church was never heated by a fire. The intermission was only for an hour, and consequently the school occupied the hour before morning service, and was suspended during the winter.

In those days the verbal memory was cultivated much more than now, and the record at the close of the second quarter of 1819 shows to what an extent this was carried: "The average attendance of scholars for that quarter was ninety-nine. Verses of the Bible repeated, 31,693; verses of hymns repeated, 25,593; answers from catechisms, 34,102; answers to McDowell's Questions, 3,434; total, 94,822 — nearly one thousand to each individual, during twenty-five Sabbaths of attendance;" on an average, toward forty verses or answers committed to memory every week for six months.

After the meeting-house was built, in 1825, stoves were introduced, the intermission was lengthened, and the school changed its hour of meeting to noon, and continued through the year.

Among the names of those who cordially enlisted in the formation of the school are those of Deacon Elisha Mann and Deacon Asa Thayer, and brethren John Mann and Barnabas Lothrop. One of the first scholars was Wales Thayer, afterwards deacon of this Church, then a boy of fourteen, a subject of the revival of 1823, and a member of the school, as pupil or teacher, till laid aside by his last sickness.

"Forty years, including 1818, the year of preparation, the first superintendent served the school in that capacity according to his best ability, never absent except when detained by circumstances beyond his control; and then," to use his own words, "retiring reluctantly, not from weariness, nor from lack of interest," "but because to all things there is a time and a season." Until prevented by the infirmities of age, his presence as a teacher continued to exhibit this interest, which was gratefully reciprocated by the school, in addition to other

remembrances, by retaining his name on the list of teachers after the active years of his life had closed.

Very few remain who were members of the school while held in the meeting-house of Dr. Strong, but the memory of quite a number of us recurs to the years when its sessions were held in the house in which Dr. Hitchcock so long ministered. Again we enter the vestry, and carefully descend the inclined plane to our seats in the room used by the town for its meetings, and, some seasons, during the week for a select school. The hum of the voices reaches our ears, and the forms of those who, then children, but now the older members of this community, and of others who have passed on to another life, rise before us. We also recall the appearance of the school when it occupied the sanctuary itself. Those who are now its members have it associated with this beautiful house of worship, superior in its appointments to the buildings which have stood upon this site before. This school has been highly favored, not only in its membership from natives of the place, but also in the aid it has received from those who were here for a time as teachers in the various schools of the higher grade. As a rule, while here they identified themselves with this people, and accomplished much good by the religious instruction which they imparted on the Sabbath, as well as by the faithful use of their abilities in teaching through the week. The names of several, now more widely known, are readily recalled, whose youthful energies were here employed for Christ. Doubtless they, as well as we who were born here, have derived an influence and received a training in this school which have been of great service in subsequent years; for the teacher himself is a learner, while the scholar, unconsciously, is a teacher.

The Sabbath evening lectures of Dr. Hitchcock, the pastor, are among the reminiscences of the school. Though not accustomed to be present at its regular sessions, he contributed largely to its success by preparing himself on the lesson of the subsequent Sabbath, and through the freshness of his

unwritten exposition awakening an enthusiasm in those who heard him.

Coming down to a later period, we find a succession of superintendents, several of whom have removed from the place. The following is the list of the superintendents and of their terms of service:

EBENEZER ALDEN, M. D.,	May 1, 1819–March 25, 1858.
ABEL B. BERRY, Esq. . . . .	March, 1858–1859.
N. C. BERRY, Esq. . . . .	March, 1859–1861.
J. F. COLBY, Esq. . . . .	March, 1861–1864.
EBENEZER MOULTON . . . . .	March, 1864–1874.
JOSEPH B. LORD . . . . .	March, 1874–1875.
GEORGE H. WILKINS . . . . .	March, 1875–

The inquiry becomes both natural and vastly important whether the school has kept pace with the changes in the times and in the community. The present generation of Christians finds the number and character of the population, the relative position of the Church, and the field to be occupied by the school, quite different from the condition of things here sixty, or even forty years ago. The Sabbath school also, as an institution, fills a larger place as an instrumentality, and employs different methods from the order of things in the earlier days. Verbal memory is not now so much cultivated. Doctrinal knowledge may not be imparted with such fullness and preciseness as when the *Assembly's Catechism* was an essential requisite to a well-conducted school; but we have helps to the study of the Bible in an abundance and wealth of learning which would have astonished our fathers as much as some of their methods would have seemed strange to us. Never, perhaps, were there at the command of Christians, and of all, young and old, such facilities for studying the Bible as we today possess. Never, perhaps, was the Bible more studied and prized. At no former period did more interest center around the life and mission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The International Lesson System has done much to

give an impulse to this increased interest in the revealed Word. As we trace this school down into its later history, its record shows that, though pastors, superintendents, and membership have changed and the conditions of its success have varied from the former order, it has advanced in numbers, in benevolence, and in influence, and that its methods have been wisely adapted to the changes of the times, and have partaken of the general spirit of progress in the Sabbath school work abroad.

Look at the school in its membership. When it left the old Church — that of Dr. Strong — it numbered 70. In 1833, just after the revival of religion of 1831, which blessed this community in common with the churches generally, its numbers had risen to 144. Passing down to another point, 1857, which nearly marks the close of the connection with it of its first superintendent, and of its occupation of the former house of worship, it had advanced in numbers to 173. Then tracing it down through the twenty-one years it has been under this roof, in the decade from 1860 to 1870 its numbers for a few years were somewhat diminished, though in 1868 there appears to have been a noticeable increase, the number for that year being recorded as 253. During the last ten years the school has uniformly numbered about 200. The last report gives the present number of the school to be 220. The average attendance for the year ending May 8th was 141; the largest attendance at any one session, 185. What is cheering and hopeful, is, that during the year 40 names were added to the roll.

Taking now the record of contributions to objects of benevolence — a most important feature, not so much on account of the amount as for the training received, which will affect the future habits of the children — reviewing the few past years (the only figures at hand), the yearly amount has gone up from \$30.32 in 1874 to \$94.62 the last year.

Among the methods employed to increase the interest of the members in the school, and to secure for it a larger place



in the hearts of the congregation, in addition to the teachers' meeting, regularly sustained for the last fifteen years, is the observance of the concert, and, what is new in this school, the practice which has grown up since 1867 of celebrating the anniversary of its organization. Once a month a pleasant diversity is made in the style of the evening service, and children and parents, the school and those not connected with it, are brought together in a manner which affords an opportunity to benefit some who are not ordinarily found in the place of prayer; while once a year the school is made prominent as one of the important aids now used by the Church in advancing the kingdom of Christ. No Church can expect to maintain its hold upon the world in these days, when the public mind is poisoned by unbelief and distracted by worldliness, which fails to adapt its measures to the changing order of things. The Sabbath school in its normal state is one of the instrumentalities under the direct control of the Church. It is doing the same work and in the same line with the preaching of the gospel and the social meeting for prayer. Its ultimate purpose is the salvation of souls. Hence it is encouraging to notice that this school has been the nursery of this Church. In the revivals of 1823 and of 1831, and in periods of religious interest at later times, a good proportion of the converts have been from the Sabbath school. At these harvest seasons have been made apparent the results of patient sowing and careful cultivation of the good seed of the Word. More cheering than an increase of numbers, or any indications of external prosperity, is the record that, so late as 1875, as the fruits of the revival of that year, eighteen members of the school united with the Church.

This brief review of the sixty-two years of this school is bright with promise for the future. The fathers, indeed, pass on from their toil here to their rest and reward. The workers in the Lord's vineyard are not the same men and women as in a former generation. Wisdom is required to avoid the abuse of some of our more recent methods in the Sabbath school



work. But there is One who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." The promises of God are sure. His covenant is with his people. Generations disappear; times and manners change. One kingdom is enduring — the kingdom which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" one empire is to be universal — that of which our crucified Redeemer is the Head. Be it ours, in our day and in our field, as teachers and pupils, to be faithful to our Lord and Master, assured that sower and reaper will rejoice together, that the Great Shepherd cares for the lambs and for the flock, and that through his Spirit he still dwells in the hearts of those whom he has redeemed.

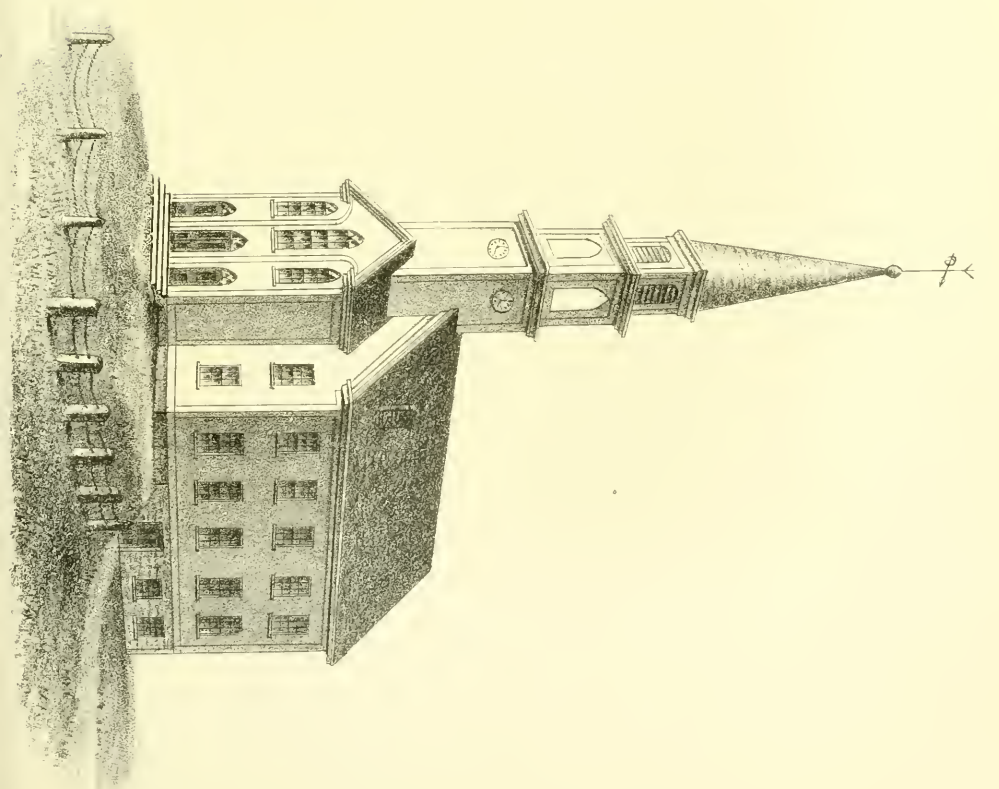
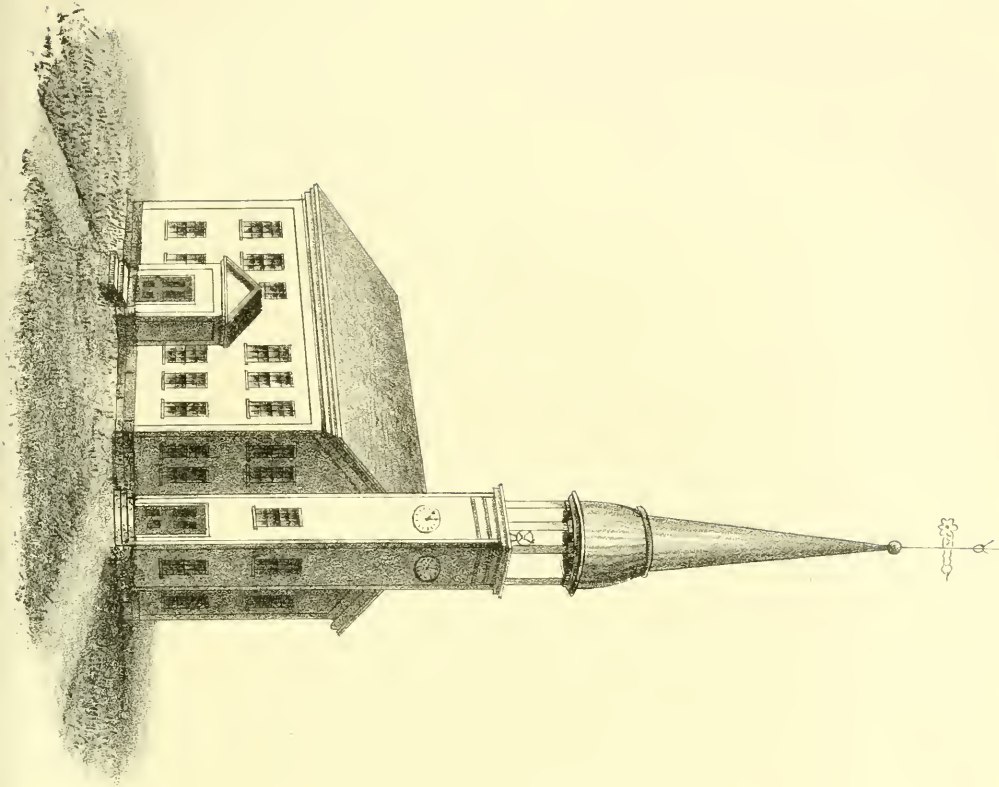
## Historical Sketch of the Four Meeting-Houses.

BY BENJAMIN DICKERMAN.

RECENTLY in the city of New York there has been reared a shaft taken from the relics of that civilization which existed thousands of years ago. How eager every prominent city or town is to gather the items of its early history, especially if it has reached an age of one hundred or more years! This is right, for we are indebted to former generations for their experience, and for this legacy we should honor their memory. One hundred and fifty summer suns have passed since the formation of this *First Church*, under whose auspices we have assembled as friends and neighbors to celebrate this anniversary day.

The committee of arrangements assigned me the task of giving a description of the four meeting-houses that have been used by this Church for worship. With reluctance was the labor entered upon, and your indulgence is asked while these hastily gathered items, collected from old manuscripts and records, are read. Especially am I indebted to our late venerable Dr. Alden for many quotations from his *History of Randolph*.

None of the early settlements, since that at Plymouth, interests us more than that of Old Braintree, and especially that of the South Precinct. By the early records we find that in 1727 about forty families had made a settlement in this section. The difficulty of traveling six or seven miles on the Sabbath to attend public worship caused much dissatis-





faction. Some twenty-eight of these pioneers met and voted to build a meeting-house, and petition the General Court of Massachusetts Bay Colony to be set off as a distinct precinct. This petition was granted, and the South Precinct of Braintree became known in history. Suffolk deeds of 1720 to 1727 reveal the location of some of these honored petitioners and builders of the first meeting-house. From this hill a path led down through what is called Mill Lane across Cochato River to the home of JOHN FRENCH, on land known as the Wales French place. A short distance further, on the same path, lived Deacon SAMUEL BASS, on land now known as Dr. Alden's farm.

Of those living in the eastern part of the precinct, we locate THOMAS FENTON on the Isaac Spear homestead; JOSEPH WALES's home, near the old Apollos Wales place. On a cart path leading southward from this hill we find Deacon THOMAS WALES, on what is now called the Wales homestead; still further south, on the same path, were MOSES CURTIS and WILLIAM LINFIELD. Going north on the "country road" leading to Rev. Mr. Niles's meeting-house, at the foot of the hill we cross a brook, then called "Circuits Ordinary," on which a saw-mill stood, a short distance to the east, owned by SAMUEL PAIN, who lived near the present location of the Catholic Cemetery. (At this saw-mill, it is probable, the lumber for the first meeting-house was saved.) Further north, on the east side of the road, SAMUEL BAGLEY and JAMES BAGLEY had their homes. On the opposite side of the road from the Bagleys lived JONATHAN HAYDEN. North of Central Cemetery JOHN NILES had his dwelling. Where the residence of Amasa Clark stands, DAVID NILES located. Near the Great Pond, then called "More's Pond," was JOHN NIGHTINGALE's home. EBENEZER NILES built a house west of Bendall's Farm, near the junction of Warren and West streets. We are unable to locate the homes of the rest of the petitioners. Nathaniel Littlefield settled near the Joshua Hunt place, on Blue Hill, and Isaac Newcomb near Dr.

Farnum's residence. Although not petitioners, they took an active part in building the first meeting-house, and deserve to be mentioned with the honored TWENTY-EIGHT.

Records also show that JOSEPH CROSBY, who lived in the North Precinct of Braintree, gave to the South Precinct (although forty shillings consideration is named in the deed) "a certain parcel of land in Braintree, in the County of Suffolk, in the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, containing one acre more or less, situated on the country road leading to Bridgewater, bounded eastwardly on said road and all other sides on the land of said Crosby, set off by certain heap of stones at the four corners thereof, &c. Dated March 1, 1727-28, and in the first year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second, King of Great Britain." Signed, "Joseph Crosby; witnesses, Benjamin French, Benjamin Thayer. Acknowledged March 4, 1727, before Edmund Quincy, Justice of the Peace. Received and entered with Suffolk Records August 23, 1757, lib. 90, page 200. Ezekiel Goldthwait, Register." The land herein described includes that occupied by this meeting-house in part, and that in front extending to the hotel and to the yard of Dr. Farnum and the Town House. The first meeting-house was built in the year 1727, on the land described in the foregoing deed, and its site was on the northerly side, in front of where the hotel now stands. For details of building the first meeting-house we have no record. The Zerubbabel to lead we do not know, but infer it was Deacon Samuel Bass; the Nehemiah must have been Deacon Thomas Wales; and the Joshua was John Niles. With such men to lead and plan, can any one doubt that the work went bravely on? Unlike Solomon, they had no King Hiram to furnish gold and silver, cedar and fir-trees, nor a King Cyrus to furnish men and material, as had Zerubbabel of old. Therefore we must not expect an elaborate structure, neither should we be critical as we examine the labor of these resolute men. Their only material was the forest, and their implements were of the roughest kind.



Having selected and gathered together the material, the foundation was laid for a building probably forty-four feet in length and about thirty-two feet in width. It was two stories in height. Tradition says it was a plank building, with a pitched roof covered with shingles. It was finished on the outside with rough boards which lapped over each other, resembling wide clapboards. The front was toward the south, and had a double door for entering. The pulpit was on the north side of the house, opposite the door, with a seat for the deacons underneath, facing the congregation. A broad aisle led from the door in front to the pulpit. Next to the walls of the house, from the door in front round to the pulpit on each side, was reserved a space about four feet and a half in width, to be covered with pews when they were needed. The floor, with this exception, was covered with permanent seats, those on the right of the pulpit to be occupied by men, those on the left by women. We do not think any of the pews were built at the time the house was erected. Arrangements for galleries were made, but they were not finished; either their resources were exhausted, or they delayed until they had a minister to consult. The records inform us that after settling a minister improvements were made. The ceiling and walls were lathed and plastered. No provisions were made for lighting or heating. Paint never was used upon the inside or the outside. The windows were small, and contained diamond glass. The house was partly finished, and public worship was held in it, near the close of 1727. We have no account of its dedication.

The first recorded vote for raising money to support preaching in the first meeting-house was that of March 19, 1728-29, when £60 was voted. "Moses Curtis and Thomas Wales were appointed a committee to agree with a minister." The committee invited Rev. Mr. Morse, of Stoughton, to preach for a short time. May 15, 1729, "It was voted to take a contribution for Mr. Morse, and Thomas Wales should hold the box, and contributors should write their names to their

money." At the same time they voted "that Isaac Newcomb should be the man to hold the pulpit." "October 14, 1729, Voted to make seats in the meeting-house, and to finish the doorway." To show the care that was exercised to protect the meeting-house from fire, I cite the following vote: "March 10, 1729-30, it was voted, that if any person shall kindle a fire within 10 rods of the meeting-house he shall forfeit 10 shillings." "Voted, that William Copeland shall be the man to prosecute the person so offending."

Having settled Rev. Elisha Eaton as their minister, the precinct commenced to make arrangements for finishing the meeting-house on the inside, and for building the pews.

December 12, 1732, "Voted, that Samuel Vinton should have that corner pew by Rev. Mr. Eaton's pew." Also voted, "that Samuel Hayden, John French, and Ebenezer Copeland be a committee to order and determine who should have the west places for pews in said meeting-house." "March 14, 1733, Voted, to do something toward finishing the meeting-house. Voted, to cut the hind seat. Voted, the following agreement between the precinct and Joshua Hayward about having a pew between the women's stairs and the great doors: Hayward to build said stairs, lay the floor in said gallery, and to lathe and plaster said gallery to the beams and plate, and built front seat in said gallery, and also the second seat in said gallery, for said pew No. —. Voted, the following agreement between the precinct and John French about the pew between the men's stairs and great doors: John French to build said stairs and lay floor in said gallery, and to lathe and plaster said gallery up to beams and plate, and also to build the front seat in said gallery for said pew. Voted, £10 toward finishing our meeting-house. Voted, Ebenezer Niles, Joseph Wales, and William Copeland be a committee to raise and pay out said money. Voted, furthermore, the said Joshua Hayden and John French to do half the work toward finishing said meeting-house before the 20th of May next ensuing, and to complete the above said work by the 16th of October next

ensuing; also that Ebenezer Niles, Joseph Wales, and William Copeland is the committee to see that the above said Joshua Hayward and John French do said work workmanlike. Voted, the said Joshua Hayward and John French's pews are to be 7 feet long and 4 feet and 10 inches in depth."

The galleries were reached by stairs in the southeast and southwest corners of the house, leading from the narrow aisles below in a zigzag form to the aisles above. Spaces for pews were reserved against the walls above, in the same manner as below. The front part of the gallery all round was furnished with benches, to be occupied by the young people. "March 13, 1735, Voted, Samuel Hayden 10 shillings to take care of said meeting-house the ensuing year." The committee chosen in 1732 reported that they had given Rev. Mr. Eaton the pew between the pulpit stairs and Samuel Vinton's, and let John Hayden have the privilege of that in the north corner of the meeting-house, for building Mr. Eaton's, and let Peter Thayer and Thomas French have front place joining men's stairs, they paying to the precinct £5. "December 2, 1735, Voted, that Thomas Wales, Thomas French, and Peter Thayer be a committee to lay out the lime that Samuel Vinton gave toward finishing the meeting-house, and the £5 that Thomas French and Peter Thayer paid for their pew, in finishing said meeting-house." "October 17, 1737, Voted, that the place for a pew under the women's stairs is granted to John Clark for £2 15s." We find a committee was chosen at this time to proceed in law against those persons who have not fulfilled their agreements with the precinct in regard to pews. That they were in earnest is shown by a vote "that Deacon Samuel Bass get a law-book for the precinct." "March 16, 1742, Voted, that Deacon Samuel Bass, Jonathan Clark, and Jonathan Hayden be a committee to build and finish the 7 hindermost seats in the two side galleries in the meeting-house, 4 in the men's gallery and 3 in women's gallery." "March 20, 1748, Voted, to sell privileges for building pews to the highest bidder."

June 7, 1749. Rev. Mr. Eaton was dismissed from the pastoral office. It was voted to give him £100, if he gives up his pew in the meeting-house. July 9, 1752, it was voted that "Joseph Hayward, Samuel Clark, and Ebenezer Crane be a committee to brace and prepare the meeting-house for the ordination of Rev. Mr. Taft, which was to take place August 26th, and to seat the Council in the two foremost seats below clear through, and the Church in the two seats in the front gallery." March 8, 1758, at a precinct meeting, a motion was made "to procure lime to point the gable end of the meeting-house, and get two bundles of shingles and one hundred clapboards for repairing the meeting-house;" but it was defeated. The last time anything was voted for repairing the meeting-house was March 7, 1759, when it was "voted to shingle the back roof of the meeting-house, and make it tight from letting in the rain and snow. Voted, that Capt. Wales, Lieut. Hayward, and Capt. Peter Thayer be a committee to make these repairs. Voted, Lieut. Seth Turner six pistereens for care of meeting-house and sweeping house 12 times." Such is the record of the First Meeting-House, a building which served well its purpose, although not attractive in appearance.

The pride of New England today is its meeting-houses, school-houses, and public libraries. From the day our forefathers set foot on Plymouth Rock, the school-house has been the handmaid of the meeting-house. We find that the settlers of the south precinct of Braintree brought with them the spirit of the fathers, since they built a school-house about the same time they built the first meeting-house. It was located on the precinct land, not far from Dr. Farnum's yard. Records of the precinct meetings show the interest manifested by our fathers in the education of the children, by the frequent appropriations made for schools.

The meeting-house of our ancestors was THE HOUSE of the precinct, and was truly a meeting house, as it was the place where the inhabitants met for the transaction of all business. On *week days* the men met to discuss topics pertaining to the

welfare of the precinct and also of the colony. On Sabbath mornings might have been seen the fathers and the mothers, with their children, wending their way along the different trails leading to their meeting-house; some coming many miles, either walking or traveling on horseback. (It is related that for thirty years after the first house was erected it was not approached by a carriage.) There was no musical bell to summons them, nor were they greeted on arrival with melodious voluntaries from the organ. They came both *morning* and *afternoon*, because of their ardent desire to worship God. And they could say, with Jacob of old, "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

The repairs made on the meeting-house in the year 1759 did not meet the wants of the precinct. New settlers were added yearly, and with them came increased wealth. The question of building a new meeting-house began to be agitated both by people and pastor. It is stated that the building had become so dilapidated that it was no protection from rain or snow, and was the habitation of swallows during the summer. January 14, 1762, all the freeholders and other inhabitants of the south precinct were warned to meet at their meeting-house at ten o'clock in the forenoon, to act on an article in a warrant for the purpose of building a new meeting-house. "It was voted to build a meeting-house, if they could agree where it shall be built." At the same meeting it was put to vote "whether all the young men in the precinct that are twenty-one years of age and upwards shall have liberty to vote in the meeting," and it passed in the affirmative. "Voted, that whenever the inhabitants on Cochato side of the river shall be set off as a parish, that the precinct will reimburse to them, toward building a meeting-house for them, as much as they pay by tax toward building a meeting-house now in hand, in the same specie as they pay in; allowing what the meeting-house shall then be valued at, less than it is when first built."

January 28, 1762, after a long debate, it was voted "that Capt. Thomas Penniman, Atherton Wales, Nathaniel Wales,



Moses Wales, and David Vinton, with other inhabitants of the town of Stoughton that have lately petitioned to their parish to be set off, might be set off, with their estates, from their parish in Stoughton to the South Precinct in Braintree."

Voted, "Gideon Herrick shall be entitled to one dollar when his services shall be done sweeping the meeting-house 12 times."

March 10, 1763, Deacon Thomas Wales, Deacon Samuel Bass, Lieut. Joshua Hayward, Mr. Ebenezer Copeland, Ensign Joseph Wales, Lieut. Joseph Hayward, Dr. Moses Baker, Mr. Eliphalet Sawin, and Samuel Wales were appointed a committee to take action about building a meeting-house.

June 6, 1763, Lieut. Joseph White, Cornet Jonathan Bass, and Mr. Eliphalet Sawin were chosen a committee to sell the pews in the new meeting-house to be built. Voted, "that the new meeting-house be built sixty feet in length and forty-five feet in width." "Voted, that persons set off from Stoughton to this precinct shall have an equal chance of purchasing pews in the new meeting-house as the present inhabitants, provided they bear their equal proportion of building the house."

August 22, 1763, "Voted, that all the timber for the frame of the new meeting-house shall be delivered at the spot where it is to be set by the first day of March next; that the sills shall be all white oak; that the house shall be covered with boards lined or sawed on their edges; that the roof shall be covered with cedar shingles, and the sides and ends with cedar clapboards. Voted, to raise £200 toward building the house, and that it shall be underpinned on the front and ends with two tiers of cut stones. Voted, also, to build a steeple, and cover the bell deck with sheet lead; and that the stones used for steps shall be hewn and laid in a circular form, according to a plan laid before the precinct." Joseph Porter, Jonathan Bass, and Eliphalet Sawin were the building committee; Deacon Bass, Deacon Wales, Lieut. Joshua Hayward, John French, Lieut. Joseph White, Capt. John White, Dr. Moses



Baker, Cornet Jonathan Bass, Jonathan Wales, and Lieut. Seth Turner were the committee to determine where to place the new meeting-house on the precinct's land.

Such were the arrangements made for building, and I have given them in full as recorded, that we may be acquainted with the methods used by our ancestors in undertaking an enterprise which was for the welfare of the community. The enthusiasm and harmony which prevailed are worthy of note, and, above all, we should commend that characteristic of paying for what they had, and not running into debt. Their descendants are to be congratulated that this virtue of the fathers has not been lost by the sons. To the honor of all generations, no mortgage has been put upon either of the four meeting-houses built upon this hill for the worship of God. This virtue should receive more than a passing notice. It should be held up today as one of the *Christian virtues*, and woven into the woof and warp of our characters, that *the real value of anything is the sacrifice made to obtain it* — whether it be school-houses, meeting-houses, or a mansion in the Celestial City.

The second meeting-house was located near the west line of the precinct land, parallel with, and three feet distant from it, extending on that line sixty feet, and easterly forty-five feet. It was two stories in height, elevated on an underpinning of two rows of hammered stone. It had a tower fifty feet in height to the bell deck, and a steeple rising from the deck forty-six feet. The entrance was by double doors in front, which were reached by circular stone steps. The interior arrangements were similar to those of the first house. A row of pews extended round the house against the walls, raised about eight inches above the level of the floor, the body of the house being divided into six rows of pews, three on each side of the broad aisle, excepting the area immediately in front of the pulpit, which was covered with seats for the use of elderly persons. The pulpit, with its imposing sounding-board above and deacons' seat beneath, stood opposite to the

front entrance. There were wide galleries on three sides of the house; the front finished throughout with pews, the two side galleries with seats, with the exception of a single row of pews in the rear of each. There were in the house when built, in 1764, fifty-six pews of a square form; of these, forty were on the lower floor and sixteen in the gallery. They were sold before the house was erected. The amount received from the sale of pews, and avails of the old meeting-house and school-house, with the £200 raised, were sufficient to pay all bills in full, amounting to a fraction over £1,000, and leave a small balance in the treasury. The old house was used for worship until the completion of the new house, when it was sold and removed.

These are the names of the subscribers for pews in the second meeting-house, with the number and price paid :

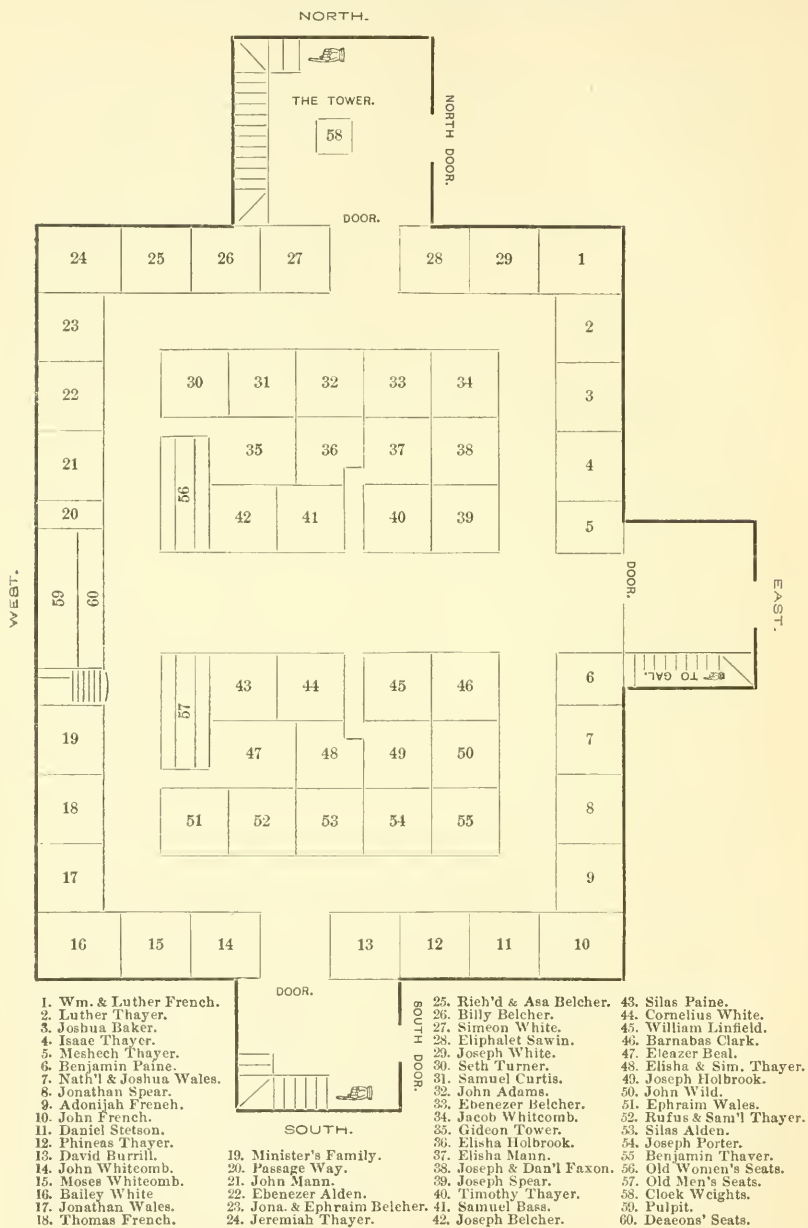
			£	s.	d.
Lieut. Joshua Hayward . . . . .	No. 1,	price	17	6	8
Benjamin Spear, Jr. . . . .	" 2,	"	15	9	4
William Linfield . . . . .	" 7,	"	14	8	0
Samuel French . . . . .	" 3,	"	13	17	4
Joseph Lovell and Jacob Goldthwait. . . . .	" 4,	"	7	16	0
Lieut. Joseph White . . . . .	" 5,	"	15	9	4
Noah Thayer and Eliphalet Sawin . . . . .	" 6,	"	13	6	8
Lieut. Nath'l Belcher and Ebenezer Copeland. . . . .	" 8,	"	17	6	8
Richard Hayden . . . . .	" 9,	"	14	8	0
Samuel Belcher . . . . .	" 10,	"	18	0	0
Cornet Jonathan Bass . . . . .	" 11,	"	20	2	8
Richard Spear . . . . .	" 12,	"	15	12	0
Parish . . . . .	" 13,	"			
Jonathan Wales . . . . .	" 14,	"	19	14	8
Atherton Wales . . . . .	" 15,	"	17	14	8
Joshua French . . . . .	" 16,	"	14	8	0
Matthew Pratt . . . . .	" 17,	"	18	13	4
Noah Whitcomb . . . . .	" 18,	"	14	5	4
Deacon Samuel Bass and Joseph Wales . . . . .	" 19,	"	14	16	0
Peletiah Stephens . . . . .	" 20,	"	15	14	8
Nathaniel Niles . . . . .	" 21,	"	7	10	0
John Niles . . . . .	" 22,	"	14	8	0
Nathaniel Wales . . . . .	" 23,	"	15	9	4
Nathaniel Payne . . . . .	" 24,	"	15	12	0
Moses Spear and Joseph Spear . . . . .	" 25,	"	15	9	4

		£	s.	d.
Widow Mary Allen . . . . .	No. 26, price	15	9	4
Nathaniel Wales . . . . .	" 27, "	15	6	8
Jonathan Hayward . . . . .	" 28, "	15	6	8
Lieut. Seth Turner . . . . .	" 29, "	13	6	8
Samuel Wales . . . . .	" 30, "	15	1	4
Ensign Joseph Wales . . . . .	" 31, "	18	8	8
Deacon Thomas Wales . . . . .	" 32, "	18	0	0
Ruphus Stitson . . . . .	" 33, "	15	6	8
Joseph Porter . . . . .	" 34, "	14	18	8
Thomas Fenton . . . . .	" 35, "	15	6	8
Abiather French . . . . .	" 36, "	15	14	8
Jonathan Wild . . . . .	" 37, "	15	9	4
John Clark . . . . .	" 38, "	15	12	0
Lieut. Joseph Hayward . . . . .	" 39, "	15	6	8
Capt. Thomas Penniman . . . . .	" 40, "	15	6	8
Capt. John White . . . . .	" 41, "	15	9	4
Lieut. Joseph White . . . . .	" 42, "	15	9	4
Zebuon Thayer, Jr., and John King . . . . .	" 43, "	7	10	0
David Vinton . . . . .	" 44, "	14	8	0
Moses Wales . . . . .	" 45, "	15	1	8
Elijah French . . . . .	" 46, "	18	0	0
Lieut. Seth Turner . . . . .	" 47, "	18	0	0
Joshua Hayward, Jr. . . . .	" 48, "	14	18	8
Dr. Moses Baker . . . . .	" 49, "	14	18	8
Ruphus Stitson, Benj. Dyer and Saml. Spear . . . . .	" 50, "	6	18	0
Isaac Niles . . . . .	" 51, "	10	13	4
Ephraim Hunt, Jr. . . . .	" 52, "	11	9	4
Lieut. Joseph Hayward . . . . .	" 53, "	10	0	0
John Bagley . . . . .	" 54, "	10	10	8
John Clark . . . . .	" 55, "	8	8	0
Silas Clark and John Hayward . . . . .	" 56, "	7	0	0

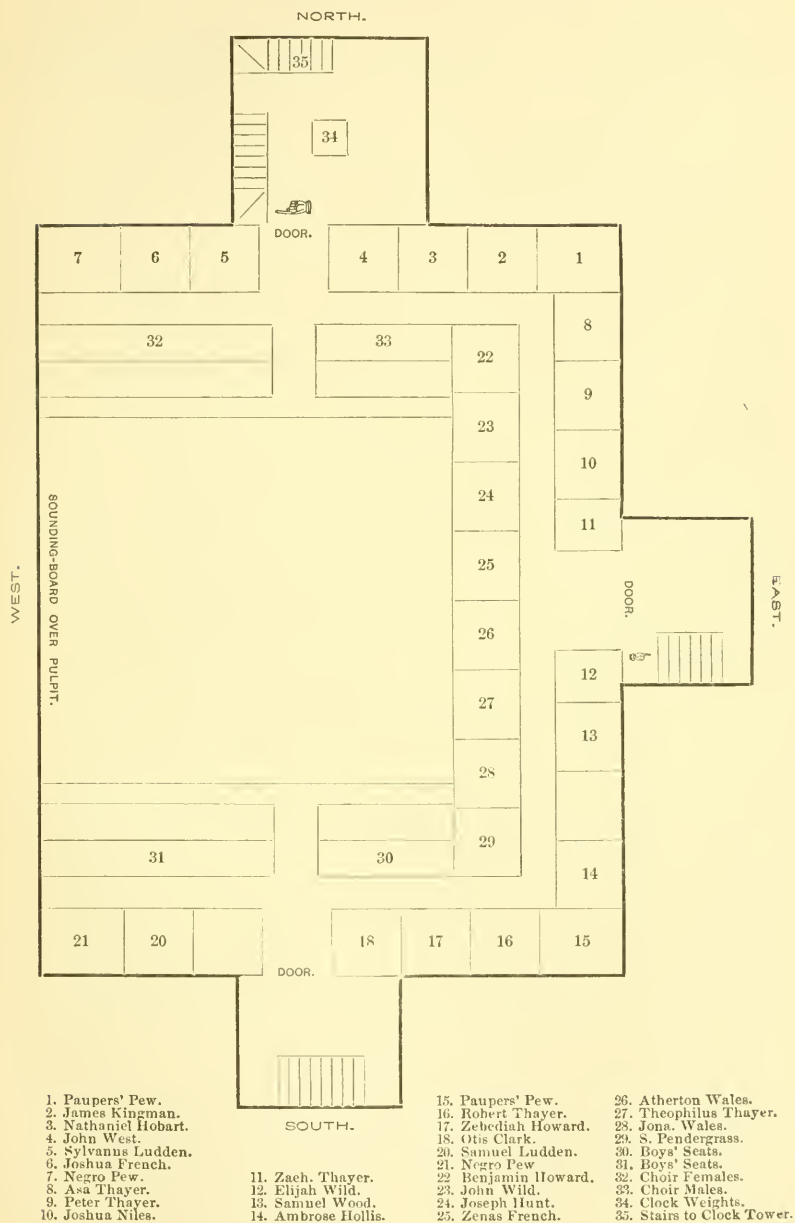
By the assistance of Hon. Bradford L. Wales, Mr. George H. Wilkins has made a drawing of the second meeting-house as it was when taken down in 1825, and a plan of the pews on the lower floor and in the galleries, with the names of the owners, and also a drawing of the third meeting-house.

The additions of pews on the lower floor and galleries from the original fifty-six will be explained by the records which will be given of the improvements in 1784 and 1796.

FLOOR PLAN OF THE SECOND CHURCH, AFTER ALTERATIONS OF 1796.



# GALLERY PLAN OF THE SECOND CHURCH, AFTER ALTERATIONS OF 1796.



The committee appointed to settle with the meeting-house committee made the following report, February 1, 1765 :

	£	s.	d.
Received from sale of pews . . . . .	785	12	0
Raised by the precinct . . . . .	200	0	0
Proceeds from sale of old meeting-house . . . . .	20	0	0
Proceeds from sale of old school-house . . . . .	2	8	0
Raised by Stoughton members . . . . .	4	8	0
	1,012	8	0
Cost of new meeting-house . . . . .	987	6	2
Balance not expended . . . . .	£25	1	10

JOSEPH WHITE,  
BENJAMIN PORTER, } *Committee.*  
JOSEPH HAYWARD,

The second meeting-house was dedicated on the first Thursday in December, 1764. Capt. Penniman was appointed to provide a cushion for the pulpit. Rev. Mr. Wibird, of the first precinct, and Rev. Mr. Dodge, of Abington, were invited to preach. Capt. Penniman and Elijah French were chosen "to tune or set the Psalm." This house was a finely proportioned building, and was considered an ornament to the precinct. By the records we find alterations were continually made, as the wants of the inhabitants increased. March 7, 1765, a bell for the new meeting-house was voted. Joseph Porter, Eliphalet Sawin, and Cornet Jonathan Bass were chosen a committee to get a bell of the weight of 550 pounds or a little more. Voted £50 for the purpose. "March 6, 1766, Voted, that the precinct meeting-house bell be rung at nine o'clock in the evening each night, that it be tolled at funerals and upon the news of any death in the precinct." "Voted, that Barach Jordan shall have \$8.00 for ringing and tolling the bell in full as recorded, and sweeping the meeting-house faithfully 12 times in the year."

March 10, 1768. The question of having a well was settled by the following vote: "that Lieut. Seth Turner and Jonathan Howard should have liberty to dig a well on the precinct land. Voted, that Lieut. Joshua Howard, Deacon Thomas



Wales, and Cornet Jonathan Bass inspect the digging of the well." This is the one found near the Town House today.

The bell did not prove to be perfect, and was taken down, after much trouble and expense. April 6, 1768, Voted, to send to England and get a bell weighing seven hundred pounds. The bell arrived in Boston, and a meeting of the precinct was called, November 10, 1768, and they voted, "that Lieut. Joseph White, Capt. Thomas Penniman, Cornet Jonathan Bass, Jonathan Wales, and Lieut. Seth Turner be a committee to go to Boston and accept the bell, if it was sound, and bring it out and see it well hung." This proved to be an excellent one.

The warrants for calling of meetings of the precinct, from its organization to 1777, had been in the name of his Majesty the King of Great Britain. March 11, 1777, we find the precinct meeting was called in the name of the government and people of the State. It was the influence of the meeting-houses upon this hill, in common with hundreds of others scattered upon these New England hills, that aroused the spirit of liberty which led to the independence of these United States.

March 4, 1779, "Voted, to repair meeting-house doors and windows, and endeavor to make the belfry tight." January 22, 1784, "Voted, to take up the two hind seats of the men's and women's below, and sell the locations for pews." March 4, 1784, "Voted, that Major Turner, Ensign Spear, Capt. Sawin, Lieut. Mann, Dr. Wild, Capt. Belcher, Capt. Richards, Lieut. Clark, be a committee to paint the meeting-house, repair the belfry, take up the two hind seats in each gallery, and sell the spots for pews." July 12, 1784, "Joshua Hayward, Col. Bass, Esquire Penniman, Lieut. Clark, Major Turner, were chosen to arrange about the seats in the galleries." They reported it was best to take 7 inches out of the second and third seats, and to make the new pews 3 feet 9 inches wide, and the alley to be 15 inches, which was accepted.

At the dedication of the second house we noted the ap-

pointing of choristers to lead the singing; from that time more attention was given to singing. In March, 1773, Simeon Thayer and Ephraim Thayer were chosen tuners, in addition to Thomas Penniman and Elijah French, who had served acceptably from the dedication of the house.

In 1778 it was voted that the singers should be seated by themselves. The three back seats below in front of the pulpit, both on the men's and women's side, were selected for their accommodation. Voted, to choose two tuners, in addition to the number in office, and Elisha Wales and Lieut. Isaac Thayer were chosen. From this time Capt. Elisha Wales was chief chorister for some twenty years. This was the first departure from congregational singing, and culminated in having permanent seats built for a choir near the pulpit, in accordance with a vote passed March 9, 1786, "To cut the women's and men's gallery seats, and the singers to have the upper part of women's seats."

In 1790 Col. Jonathan Bass made the parish a present of a clock, which was placed upon the tower of the second meeting-house. June 22, it was voted to accept the gift, and that an inscription of the donor's name should be written on the face of the clock. *I doubt not many present today recollect the inscription, if they do not the clock.* It must have been made of better material than some of the present day, to have lasted seventy years.

In 1796 it was voted "to sell the two back seats on the lower floor each side the broad aisle, to be made into 4 pews, and 20 inches to be cut off from the ends of the remaining two seats, to accommodate the new pews with alleys." "Voted, to build two porches to the meeting-house, one on the east side and one on the south side. Voted, to give Samuel Bass, Barnabas Clark, and Solomon White \$70.00 and privilege of building pews for their own benefit, in southeast and northeast corners of the meeting-house below and above stairs, for building two porches, as follows: one on the front of the meeting-house, one story high, 9 feet by 8½ feet; the

other at the south end of the meeting-house, two stories high, 10 feet by 10 feet, with a pair of stairs; both to be finished off and painted handsomely, with doors, underpinning, and windows, and cut doors through the sides of the meeting-house into the side galleries." Before the meeting adjourned, we find, they thought best to have both porches two stories in height, for they voted, "to allow Mr. Seth Mann \$30.00 toward raising the porch aforesaid on the east side of the meeting-house another story, building stairs, and painting; and allow the persons whose pews it might injure, by making an alley through them, any reasonable compensation that the committee for repairing the meeting-house may think proper for that purpose." These repairs and improvements changed the appearance of the second house very much.

A complaint was made that taking part of the women's seats for the singers did not give them room enough. A vote was passed, "that Joseph White, Nathaniel Niles, and Moses Whitcomb be a committee to purchase a pew of the meeting-house committee, to accommodate the women, in lieu of the women's seats which are occupied by the singers." We must commend our ancestors for the provision they made that all should have places provided in the meeting-house to worship God without money and without price. September 9, 1803, a vote was passed, that "Dr. E. Alden, Seth Turner, Jr., and Samuel Bass be a committee to superintend the painting of the meeting-house inside." We find that Luther French agreed to take care of the meeting-house, ring the bell, sweep the meeting-house properly, for \$7.00, and take care of the clock for \$3.00.

"March 10, 1808, Voted, that Samuel Bass, Esq., Jonathan Wales, Jr., Joseph White, Major Barnabas Clark, Lieut. Nathaniel Niles, Seth Turner, Lieut. Jonathan Belcher, Zenas French, Lieut. David Burrell, be a committee to paint the meeting-house, repair the belfry, if it should be thought proper, *after* examining the treasury, and viewing the meeting-house. Also voted, two dollars to be paid to the person

who may play on the bass-viol the coming year." This was the beginning of paying for music, and the introduction of instruments into the meeting-house choir.

It is related that during the war of 1812 with Great Britain, news came one Sabbath day, during the morning service, that the British squadron was off the coast, and the soldiers were making a landing at Cohasset in force. The courier that brought the news entered the meeting-house, ascended the pulpit stairs, and handed to Rev. Jonathan Strong, the pastor, a paper, which was a call for all soldiers to hasten to Cohasset. This was read by the pastor. In a brief address he urged not only the soldiers, but the citizens, to take their guns and hasten to the place of danger, defend their homes, and acquit themselves like men; and then offering a fervent prayer commending them to God's care, dismissed the meeting. Col. Barnabas Clark, jumping up on his pew, announced he would meet all that would go at one o'clock in front of the meeting-house, and lead them to the scene of danger. Some 400 or more soldiers and citizens met at the appointed time, and, headed by Col. Clark, marched for Cohasset. Rev. Jonathan Strong went in a chaise with Dr. Jonathan Wales. Such was the spirit of the pulpit of the second meeting-house when our country was in danger during its childhood.

The pews in the first and second houses were square, with seats all round hung with hinges; and it was the custom in those days to *stand during prayer*, when the seats were raised. At the close of prayer the seats were allowed to fall, or in some instances were forced down, creating a response which was anything but musical. It became so annoying that, May 12, 1815, a vote was passed, "that the owners of pews should prevent, if possible, the falling of their seats, thereby interrupting public worship, and that they request those who sit in them to observe and do the same." No one can doubt that our fathers desired to pay all due homage to the memory of the departed, from a vote passed in 1816, "That the sexton be instructed to toll the bell at the death of all persons,

from sunrise till it is two hours high." In 1818 the question of repairing the old house or building a new one was agitated. "It was voted, to build rather than repair." Then most of the residents living east of Cochato River petitioned to the General Court to be set off as a separate parish. January 8, 1819, "It was voted, that Barnabas Clark, Seth Mann, Esq., Capt. Luther Thayer, Royal Turner, Joseph Hunt, Isaac Thayer, and Lieut. David Burrell be a committee to go to the General Court and oppose the division of the parish." Notwithstanding the opposition, the petition was granted, and the eastern portion, which is now called Holbrook, was set off as a parish by itself. This delayed the building of the new house. April 29, 1824. At a parish meeting held, a committee of FIFTY-TWO of the prominent members of the parish was chosen to consider what was for the interest of the parish, either to repair the old house or build a new one. June 7, 1824, this committee reported that it was best to build a new house, and John Mann, Capt. Luther Thayer, and Col. Royal Turner were chosen a committee to raise a fund of \$4,000 for the purpose of building the house. This was raised as a sinking fund, and when the pews were sold in the new house, then this money was to be replaced and made a perpetual fund. The committee of fifty-two, with the rest of the parish, were in council often during the summer of 1824, and perfected the plans for raising money and building a meeting-house during the summer of 1825. On the finance committee we find the well-known names of Turner, Alden, and Bass, which State Street would at that day have called *good enough*. On the committee for making plans and superintending the building we find that the noted family of carpenters called Belcher were the controlling spirits. With such committees, I think all will agree that everything must have been done by rule, and all bills paid on the square. Public worship was held in the second meeting-house for the last time on Sunday, April 3, 1825, and the east parish was invited to join in the



farewell to this house. On Tuesday, April 5, 1825, the work of taking down the old house was commenced.

Many relics of the second meeting-house still exist. The vane adorns the barn of Mr. John Holbrook, of Holbrook. The circular stone steps are in use today at the residence of the late Jonathan Belcher, of this town.

The parish not having a place for worship, and there being no suitable hall in this vicinity, John King, Esq., kindly allowed them the use of the north part of his house for public worship, until the new house was built.

The location of the third meeting-house was a short distance to the south and west of the second, not varying much from the site of the present house. The history of the third meeting-house is written in the memory of many of those present. For the benefit of those whose memory does not go back to 1860, allow me to say that the third meeting-house stands today a short distance from here, on North Street. Although shorn of clock, bell, and steeple, the exterior is much the same as when it stood upon this hill. The projection, with its three doors, as now seen, was the tower upon which rested the steeple. These doors were the entrance to the vestibule. In the vestibule hung for many years a case with a glass covering, which served as a bulletin to reveal the marriage intentions of the joyous and hopeful, and was the center of attraction to all. From the vestibule two doors entered the audience-room; from these doors two aisles extended to the rear of the house. The pulpit was on the east, between the entrance doors. It was built of mahogany, and was considered a model of its kind. It was entered by stairs at the sides, leading from an aisle or open space in front. Between the aisles were two rows of pews, with one row on the north and one on the south, fifteen pews in each row, three pews in the northeast corner, and three in the southeast corner, reached by an extension of the aisle in front of the pulpit, making sixty-six pews on the floor of the audience-room. It had a gallery round the house, which was reached by winding stairs in the



vestibule. Seats were built for singers over the vestibule, back of the pulpit. From the stairs, passage-ways led by the singer-seats to aisles which went round the house. The pews which extended round the front of the gallery were reached by taking two steps down. Pews were against the north and south walls, but none on the west. There were thirty pews in the galleries, making ninety-six in the house. The trimmings of the pews were mahogany. The house was painted within and without, but was not carpeted, neither, for some years, was it furnished with conveniences for lighting and heating. The clock which hangs in the large lecture-room below was the one which ornamented the gallery in front of the pulpit, and was an object of interest to both preacher and hearer as the tenthlies and fifteenthlies were reached.

Upon entering the audience-room one had to meet the gaze of three hundred or more pairs of eyes, and go through an inspection which to timid people was trying. I doubt not the ministers of the third house found it was as *hard to guide the eye as the heart*. (I think one reason why a new house was built in 1860 was that minister and people were tired of these weekly reviews.) The third house was commodious and well built, but did not stand upon this hill as long as the first meeting-house. The first house was used for public worship thirty-seven years, the second sixty-one years, the third thirty-five years.

The third meeting-house was completed and dedication services were held on Wednesday, the second day of November, 1825; and Rev. Dr. Codman, of Dorchester, led in an introductory prayer, Rev. Samuel Gile, of Milton, offered the dedicatory prayer, Rev. R. S. Storrs, of Braintree, read the Scriptures, Rev. Calvin Hitchcock preached the sermon, and Rev. David Brigham led in the closing prayer. It is said that the day was pleasant and the house filled to overflowing, and the music was highly spoken of. The sale of pews was on November 3d, and what were sold brought enough to pay all bills contracted and leave a surplus of \$1,000, which went to

increase a fund raised for the support of the ministry. The cost of the third meeting-house was \$8,695.40.

Among the bills paid on the third house I should like to read one, were it not for seeing some in the audience who may be more than interested. Perhaps you will pardon me if I read one item. The item reads: "To 11 drinks furnished at the raising of the meeting-house, 35 cts." Whether this was the wholesale or the retail price is a question.

The bell of the second meeting-house was placed in the belfry of the third. It had not been there long before it was broken by tolling at the death of some person. After much trouble and delay, another bell was obtained, which hangs today in the tower of this meeting-house. This bell has been a faithful sentinel for more than fifty years, warning us of threatened dangers, proclaiming our joys and sorrows, and never tiring of *calling all* by its musical notes to the house of God.

A vestry was built under the third meeting-house which was used, instead of the audience-room, for holding meetings on week-days and Sabbath School on the Sabbath. The town, which had used the first and second meeting-houses for holding its meetings, made arrangements for using the vestry for town purposes until the building of the town hall, in 1842.

Mr. Isaac Wetherell taught the first high-school opened in this town, in the vestry of the third meeting-house, in 1832, which was attended by many pupils who have since become an honor to the community in which they reside. Methinks some among us today look back to that period as the brightest of their life. One of these pupils has addressed you today, and others are expected to do so. From the enthusiasm aroused by this parish voting that the vestry of the third meeting-house might be used for a high-school, an academy was built which was an ornament to the town, a blessing to many in our midst, and to others, scattered over all portions of the globe, who now look back with pride to this their *alma mater*.

In 1834 it was voted to get two good stoves to heat the meeting-house. Many present can picture those stoves, three stories in height, standing in each aisle, near the stairs leading to the pulpit. The warming of the house was a comfort to worshipers, as well as a relief to friends living near the meeting-house. It was the custom of at least one family living near the meeting-house (I think some before me can testify to its truth) to make a fire on cold Sabbath mornings at sunrise in an open fireplace (such as were common in those days), that the logs might be turned into coals by ten o'clock, serving as a reservoir for filling the foot-stoves, which were used by all the ladies attending worship.

In 1834 a clock with three faces was placed upon the steeple, which remained until the house was removed.

In 1854 Dr. E. Alden, Colonel Moses C. Beal, and Jonathan Belcher were chosen a committee to make all needed repairs on the meeting-house. They had the house thoroughly repaired, painted inside and out, pews grained, aisles carpeted, and furnaces put up for heating, thus improving its appearance and contributing to the comfort of the worshipers.

1859. The question of enlarging the third house or building a new one was agitated, and after many meetings had been held it was finally voted to build a house to contain about one hundred and twenty pews, and land was obtained of Col. Royal Turner and John Alden, and the fourth meeting-house was located as it is seen today. A committee of ten were chosen, and when I tell you that the names of Alden and Turner were among the ten, you will be assured of the financial success of the undertaking; and the name of Belcher guaranteed a building of architectural beauty. Above all, when I inform you these ten were headed by a Wales — not a Thomas, as at the building of the first meeting-house, but now a *noble* Jonathan as a Nehemiah — do you think that if there *had* been a Sanballat to oppose, the walls would not have gone up? The walls did go up, and the fourth meeting-house was built in 1860, and dedicated on Wednesday, Feb-

ruary 27, 1861. The cost of the house, with the amount paid to the pew-owners in the third house, was nearly twenty-five thousand dollars. February 28, 1861, the pews were offered for sale, and about nineteen thousand dollars was realized from what were sold. The balance of the twenty-five thousand dollars was raised a few years afterward, leaving the house free from debt, and the parish the owner of a large number of pews for rental. The pulpit, which is an ornament to the house, was the gift of Alexander Strong, Esq., son of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Strong. Last year the house was renovated and polished, at an expense of four thousand dollars, the money being raised by subscription.

To you who occupy these pews I shall leave the writing of the history of this house. Will you bear with me a moment, to say that four from that committee of ten are not with us today? They have left us ~~their~~ example, and we behold the result of their labor. Let us think of this meeting-house as a monument of their worth, and ever, as we come within these sacred walls, step lightly in honor of their memory.

In natural philosophy it is laid down as a law that matter acts upon matter as it is acted upon, until all the particles in the universe are affected. If such is the fact, with how much greater force is this law applied in intellectual philosophy — to mind acting upon mind! We cannot attempt to measure the influence that has gone forth from these four meeting-houses upon this community and upon the world. Eternity can only reveal this. Your attention has been called to the deeds of the fathers; but I would not have you forget the influence of the mothers. Although it may not be recorded in old manuscripts, it *has* been written upon the hearts of faithful sons and dutiful daughters. It is the united influence of working fathers and praying mothers that has brought us the blessings we enjoy. Let the lessons of the hour, the memories of the past, the opportunities of the present, the rewards of the future, be incentives to us to go forward, respecting ourselves, blessing our fellow-men, and honoring our God.

# Evening Exercises.

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## History of the Psalms and Hymns and Music

OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF RANDOLPH.

BY REV. ASA MANN.

THE history of music began when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy; for as naturally as the flowers appear on the earth and the time of the singing of the birds does come, so natural is it for man to sing. And doubtless the worship of Adam and Eve, surrounded as they were with the profusion of Eden, was more in songs of thanksgiving and praise than in prayer. And Mary sounded forth her joy in the full-toned voice of the ancient chant,

“My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
And my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour,”

at the certainty of his early coming.

The Pilgrims of Plymouth and the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay were a kind of double protestants — protesting against what they deemed the unchristian restraints upon the personal activity of the common people in worship, as well as against the corruptions of the Roman and English national churches of their times. The singing in the Roman churches had been usurped by the clergy, as a priestly function, and

was performed in public worship by the inferior clerical orders exclusively, and had been appointed in Latin, to cut off the voices of the people.

Worship with our Puritan fathers, on the contrary, was a direct personal act—not the listening to, or the looking at the act of another. A religion of proxy was their abomination, whether it concerned doctrines to be believed, or meritorious acts to be performed, or worship in any of its forms to be paid; and it met their unyielding refusal. This is the key to much of their extreme tenacity of conscience and of will on minor points, which tenacity may seem willfulness, if this their view is forgotten, but is seen to be a noble loyalty to truth, when this fact is remembered.

When they separated from the national Church, they took with them their Bibles and Metrical Psalms. They left organ and every instrument behind, because these had been used to drown words, to bewilder the attention, and to draw away the mind from individual worship to a musical entertainment—a total perversion of their proper use, in whatever age of the world it takes place. But they took with them their native talent and acquired skill, and an honest conscience. And congregational singing had become extensively popular in England before they left their native shores—so popular that, we are told, six thousand would sometimes be found singing together in and around (the outside of) the churches of London. Congregational singing has continued popular on the continent of Europe, especially in Protestant Germany, from the time of Luther to the present day. It is still prevalent in the Scotch and German churches of this country.

The Puritans adhered to what they considered their right, their privilege, and their duty—a threefold cord, strong, surely, to them. They brought this custom and the joy of it to these shores when they came. And,

“ Amidst the storms they sang,  
And the stars heard, and the sea;  
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang  
To the anthems of the free.

. . . . .



“ What sought they thus afar?  
 Bright jewels of the mine?  
 The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?  
 They sought a faith's pure shrine.

“ Ay, call it holy ground,  
 The spot where first they trod;  
 They have left unstained what there they found —  
 Freedom to worship God.”

WHAT WORDS DID OUR ANCESTORS SING?

When the Pilgrims of the Mayflower came to Plymouth they brought with them *Ainsworth's Version of the Psalms*. The Puritans of Boston and Salem brought *Sternhold and Hopkins's Version*. These books contain little else but translations of the Psalms from the Hebrew, as literal as possible and yet be set in lines of long and common meter. Their style seems to us defective and rude. But let us remember that all English poetry at that age was both defective and rude, and that the smoothness, melody, versatility, strength, rhythm, and rhyme of which our language is capable have been attained since. Ainsworth says: “I have enterprised this work with regard to God's honor, and the comfort of his people; that his word might dwell in us richly in all wisdom; and that we might teach one another in psalms and hymns and songs spiritual. This I have endeavored to effect by setting over into our tongue the Psalms in Meter.”

Yet so reverent and thoughtful were the fine Hebrew scholars among the first ministers of New England, that they were not quite satisfied with these versions. Our first ministers were eminent as scholars among the English clergy. Some of them would be eminent as Hebraists at the present day. They far surpassed the most of the ministry of our country now. And therefore, in less than ten years after the settlement of Boston, they selected three of their number — Wild and Eliot, of Roxbury, and Mather, of Dorchester — to prepare a better version, a truer version, and a smoother and more metrical version, while it was sought to be more literal

also; no easy task. Shepherd, of Cambridge, gave them the following charge:

“Ye Roxbury poets, keep clear of the crime  
Of missing to give us a very good rhyme;  
And you of Dorchester, your verses lengthen,  
And with the text's own words you will them strengthen.”

This book, called the *Bay Psalm-Book*, or *The New England Psalm-Book*, was very acceptable to the churches at the very first; and after having passed through a little more refinement by President Dunster and others, became the standard book in this country. It also proved to be very popular in England and Scotland, passing through eighteen or twenty editions in England, and twenty-two in Scotland. This shows the high scholarship of our early ministry. *It was the first book printed in America—1640.* No English Bible was printed in America till something like one hundred and forty years afterward, Bibles being imported from England and Scotland. These Bibles from the old countries often contained the *New England Psalm-Book* bound up with them, as is still true of Scotch Bibles with *Rouse's Version* in the back part. This book, in its original style, held its place for more than one hundred years. In 1758, one hundred and eighteen years after its first edition, it was revised again, by Prince, of Boston, and enlarged with the addition of other hymns. In this Church it continued to be used till near the close of the Rev. Mr. Taft's ministry, when it was superseded by *Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns*—a book universally acknowledged by all English-speaking people to be vastly superior to anything that had yet appeared—and, with the addition of *Dr. Worcester's Select Hymns*, retained its place in this congregation till the dedication of this goodly temple, this Beauty of Holiness, in which we are now assembled, when the *Sabbath Hymn and Tune-Book* was introduced, and remained in use twenty years, or till 1880, when *Spiritual Songs* was introduced.

People were willing *to take time* for singing in those good

old times of stout men and strong women—men, who had spent the week in clearing and tilling the land and laying stone wall, or fighting the Indians—women, who had walked to and fro by the spinning-wheel, or whose strong arms brought the weaver's beam with a boom against the woof. In our superior times of refinement and delicacy, or of hurry and snap, it is difficult to get five stanzas sung, even in the quickstep movement so frequent at the present day. But they were accustomed to sing the whole Psalm, longer or shorter as it might be, containing sixty or one hundred and twenty lines; and the whole congregation sang, and stood through it all. We are told that they sometimes employed a full half-hour in this service of a single Psalm, and neither faltered nor fainted in their devotion. Well did they earn the name of the "standing order."

The singing in public worship, as I have already remarked, was by the whole congregation—*i. e.*, all that could sing, or thought they could. And the point of individual active participation by lip and voice was urged so strenuously upon the people by the ministry, that they who did not actively unite in the service of song—though it were only in making "a loud noise unto the Lord"—were deemed quite undutiful and negligent. The following anecdote illustrates the ideas and spirit of the times as to participation in worship, and as to the freedom of the clergy in prompting to particular duty. A Scotch minister, settled at Pelham, observing on a Sunday a man inactive in the service of song, (at the close of a stanza) addressed him thus: "Will'um, who have ye hired to serve the Lord for you to-day? and how moch do ye gi'e him?"

Church music was held in as much reverence as the Psalms themselves. It was the custom of the people to take off their hats, and exhibit as much respect as for Scripture or for prayer, when they were within the hearing of a sacred tune, even if they were where they could not understand the words. This same spirit of reverence is still found in some parts of the world where the lofty and sacred grandeur of choral song

of the whole congregation is the prevailing style. An American gentleman attended an Armenian church in Constantinople, some years ago, and was pleased with the music, though he could not understand the words. They all sang the same part, and, while singing, they had their eyes closed, and the tears trickled down their cheeks. On inquiring what the hymn was, one of the missionaries informed him that it was "Rock of Ages, cleft for me."

WHAT WERE THE TUNES AND THE STYLE OF SINGING IN THE  
DIFFERENT PERIODS?

There are three distinct periods in the history of music in this Church, and also in the history of most of the churches of New England: (1) the period preceding the influence of Billings; (2) the period when his influence was predominant; (3) the period after his influence began to wane.

The style and quality as well as the fewness of the tunes of the early period would by no means satisfy the cultured taste of the present age, or bear any comparison with the confusing variety and burdensome number of our hymns and tunes.

The music used for a long time — largely till *Watts* superseded the *Bay Psalm-Book* — was taken from *Ravencroft's Collection*, a book published in 1618, containing excellent harmonies and many tunes, a standard book in England and the Colonies. The tunes actually used in the congregations were written or printed in the *Psalm-Book* on the left side of the page, the air only being given, but the number rarely exceeded five or six.

Though music was taught in Harvard College for a number of years after its establishment, it soon became a marvelous defect that little or no effort was made to teach the young throughout the various towns to *read* music. The sad result began to appear early, and continued for more than a hundred years — more than a hundred and fifty in some places. The singing became in a few years, in most congregations, wholly by rote, without any standard of the correctness of a single

tune in even the minds of the leaders. Some congregations had to confine themselves to two tunes, for want of a knowledge of more; and the few tunes they did sing were sung so variously in the different congregations, as hardly to keep their identity. The mass of the people failing to learn to read music, musical notes became unmeaning signs; and they soon became satisfied to sing by rote, and even strongly wedded to the fanciful style of the different and differing leaders of their several towns and congregations. These leaders often used the largest liberty in "piling on the agony" of their wonderful trills and emotional expressions; and as they did not understand the musical signs of the tunes printed in their psalm-books, the great majority of the people failed to purchase these books, and thus became dependent on the piecemeal reading in public of the very words which they were to sing. This is the origin of "lining off," or "deaconing off," the psalm in this country. But the custom had become prevalent in England first; for in 1664 the Westminster Assembly recommended to the churches not supplied with books, to read line by line. Indeed, the practice began a century before, in Germany, by the zeal of Luther that all should sing; because at that age thousands, and perhaps millions, on the Continent and the British Isles were unable to read at all, and if they were to participate in song, they must have the words given them beforehand. It took thirty or forty years to introduce this custom of "lining off." It continued in some places for nearly one hundred and fifty years, and was the occasion of great controversy in its removal. Most of the ministry with any musical taste favored its removal; though some, like Father Niles, of Braintree, were immoderately persistent for its continuance. It was never adopted by some churches. But it is not strange, to those who will think it all through, that multitudes should be very loth to give up a form of service which had been associated with all their religious life — family life, social life, as well as Sabbath-day life; and, moreover, if well done (as in some places it doubtless was), it had

a certain dignity about it, and responsive sociality, securing general active participation in the act of worship, which hardly any other method has so fully secured. I have heard this method where a whole stanza was read at a time, which was so impressive that I shall never forget it. It is the practice of some Canadian churches at the present day, and would be a pleasing variety in any church on any Sabbath. But the giving up of reading by lines involved the giving up of most of these impressive points. Voices that had been vocal for fifty or seventy years were told by implication that the comfort of the congregation would be promoted and the worship of God improved by their silence. No wonder their self-respect—not to say their vanity—felt a little stunned at the news, and might not reach a swift acceptance of the truthfulness of such an announcement. The custom of lining off held its way in this Church, as in Braintree, till beyond 1781.

#### TUNES.

The same tunes were sung for nearly one hundred and fifty years; that is, from the landing of the Pilgrims till 1770. A very few additions were made; but these additions did not equal the number that became “confused, frittered away, and lost” in congregations where not a person, not even the leader chosen in town-meeting, could read music, and where a person who could sing a tune by notes without having first heard it sung by another was looked upon as one who had caught a trick so extraordinary that he must have learned the secret art from the great master of tricks.

The tunes of this early period were all sung in unison—that is, with all voices on one part—many, of course, trying to reach tones too high or too low for their native capacity; and, with leaders who had no standard of pitch, and no tuning-fork or pitch-pipe, with no instrument whatever to give the key, it is easy to imagine what confusion, breakdowns, and attempted continuances worse than failures, would sometimes result.



[The ancient choir were here invited to stand and sing together the *air* alone, the leader of the choir, John B. Thayer, giving the key by a pitch-pipe which had been used by Benjamin Pierce in the First Church of Dorchester. It is now in the possession of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, Boston. The words sung were two stanzas of the 18th Psalm of *Sternhold and Hopkins's Version*, to a tune printed by their side.]

Nevertheless, there were musical souls to whom the defects and failures spoken of were a constant trouble. They were endowed by nature with correct ears and tuneful voices, and some of them — especially some of the ministry — kept themselves acquainted with the progress of music in the old countries, and they acquired skill in the art themselves. They sighed most earnestly for what, with due pains, might be enjoyed by the people of the colonies also, and they finally set themselves persistently to work a reformation in this part of worship. It is a remarkable fact that during this very period of neglect to learn to read music in America much of the sublimest music that has ever been written was composed. I refer to the oratorios, the requiems and masses and anthems of Handel and Haydn and Mozart. These the musical people of America knew something about, as well as the greater variety and correct text of the tunes in *Ravencroft's Collection*, which was the fountain of nearly all church tunes of the times.

About 1714 Rev. John Tufts, of Newburyport, published a book of tunes, twenty-eight in number, "with rules," as he said, so that the tunes might be learned with greatest ease and speed imaginable. This was the first book of the kind in New England. The number of tunes, twenty-eight, was considered enormous. They were in three parts, reprinted from Ravencroft, purely choral — *e. g.*, York, Mear, and others similar.

Rev. Thomas Walter, of Roxbury, edited in 1721 the first book with the art of singing by note, and with bars to divide the measure. He says: "So little attention was paid to time, and they became so slow and drawling, that they were often one or two words apart, and the whole exercise sounded like

five hundred tunes roared out at the same time, producing noises beyond expression hideous, and sometimes so prolonged that I myself have paused twice to take breath on one note, while others were shaking out their turns and quavers, though no two men in the congregation quavered alike or together. And the tunes, for want of a standard note-book, were left to the mercy of every unskillful throat to chop and alter, twist and change, according to their infinitely divers and no less odd humors and fancies." This book received the special recommendation of the clergy in and around Boston, who say: "We would encourage all, and especially the young people, to accomplish themselves with skill to sing the songs of the Lord, according to the good rules of psalmody, hoping that the consequence of it will be that not only the assemblies of Zion will decently and orderly carry on this exercise of piety, but also it will be the more introduced into private families, and become part of our family sacrifice." Signed by fourteen ministers.

Our fathers often — oftener than now, I judge — sang at family prayers, as in Scotland, to which custom Burns alludes in his "Cotter's Saturday Night:"

"They chant their artless notes in simple guise;  
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim.  
Perhaps Dundee's wild, warbling notes arise,  
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name;  
Or noble Elgin beats the heavenward flame,  
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays.  
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame.  
The tickled ears no heartfelt raptures raise;  
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise."

The tunes in these books were nearly all written in whole notes or half notes, so that the movement was very slow — *e. g.*, Bangor, Mear.

But wherever these books were procured and studied, a greater variety of tunes was prepared, and they, whose interest in a better style of song had induced them to learn both the art and the tunes, were eager to have them used. And yet

the introduction of new tunes in indefinite numbers at once silenced a large portion of the congregation—that portion who had not learned them. Moreover, those who had learned to sing by rule desired to sing the tunes already familiar as they were actually printed—a difference quite amazing in many a tune. Hence arose the controversy and division about singing by *note* and singing by *rote*, which took place in almost every parish. This was not a controversy over differing tastes and degrees of knowledge merely, or chiefly, though that had something to do with it; but rather it was a question of congregational worship—of individual, active service—which had been the thought and sentiment and practice of generations. And if men were disciplined (as in Braintree they were, when this Church was yet a part of that), it was because, by their practice, they were forcing away a majority of the people from what they deemed their duty and privilege; for singing by note involved the singing by a separate number, much more absolutely than would be true now. And choirs did follow in due time in all parishes. This, in their view, was singing by proxy, serving God by proxy, the essence of Popery. This is their meaning when they said, “Singing by note leads to Popery.” There is a shade of truth in it, enough to be pleaded by those who could make that plea more easily than take the trouble to learn to sing themselves.

The custom of “lining off” continued here till between 1780 and 1790—about one hundred years ago. It went silently out when *Watts's Psalms and Hymns* came in. In 1781 the parish voted, “The singers shall sing half the time by reading one line, and half the time by reading two lines.” The parish regularly appointed “tuners” to raise the tune and direct the time and pitch, which was given by a wooden pitch-pipe, to which the singers answered by sounding forth the key, and going up and down the octave, by sounding the third, fifth, and eighth notes.

The deacons were the “tuners” as well as the liners-off till

1764; but as Deacon Bass and Deacon Wild were not singers, the precinct appointed Captain Thomas Penniman and Elijah French "tuners." Elijah French had a powerful tenor voice, and usually acted as chief "tuner." Captain Penniman led off the base voices.

In 1773 the precinct agreed to sing a collection of tunes, and appointed a committee to make the collection. These votes show that they began to sing in parts, no longer in simple unison, and were reaching after greater variety. Simeon Thayer and Ephraim Thayer were appointed additional "tuners."

In 1778, "Voted, that the singers sit in the three back seats below, in front of the pulpit, both on the men's and women's side." Elisha Wales and Lieutenant Isaac Thayer were added to the choristers. From this time Captain Elisha Wales became and continued chief chorister for twenty years.

In 1786 it was "Voted, to cut the women's gallery for the singers, and that the singers shall have the upper part of them"; that is, nearest the pulpit. At this meeting, also, Silas Paine was appointed chorister. Henceforth the singing was chiefly by the choir, though not to the exclusion of the congregation.

The collections of tunes by Rev. John Tufts and Rev. Thomas Walter were chiefly used before 1750.

In 1770 William Billings published his *New England Psalm-Book*. No American had published an original tune before Billings. He was the pioneer of choirs, public singing-schools, and concerts. He was the first writer of American music, who by his teachings and publications awakened a musical enthusiasm throughout New England. A book imported from England contained the first fugue tunes seen in America, such as the 34th Psalm, whose words were:

"Through all the changing scenes of life,  
In trouble and in joy,  
The praises of my God shall still  
My heart and tongue employ."

This class of tunes seems to have excited the attention and awakened the genius of Billings (who was born in Boston October 7, 1747; died, September, 1800). His fondness for the fugue—not to say his extravagance of delight—is shown in his preface to the *Continental Harmony*. He writes: “It is an old maxim that variety is always pleasing, and it is well known that there is more variety in one piece of fugue music than in twenty pieces of plain song; for while the *tones* do sweetly coincide and agree, the *words* are seemingly engaged in a musical warfare; and excuse the paradox if I further add, that each part seems determined, by dint of harmony and strength of accent, to drown his competitor in an ocean of harmony; and while each part is thus mutually striving for the mastery and sweetly contending for the victory, the audience are most luxuriously entertained and exceedingly delighted. In the mean time their minds are surprisingly agitated and extremely fluctuated, sometimes declaring in favor of one part and sometimes of another. Now the solemn *bass* demands their attention, now the manly *tenor*, now the lofty *counter*, now the volatile *treble*—now here, now there, now here again. Oh, enchanting! Oh, ecstatic! Push on, push on, ye sons of harmony, and

“Discharge your deep-mouthed cannon, full fraught with diapason.  
May you, Maestoso, rush on to choro grando,  
And then with vigoroso let fly your diapentes  
About our nervous system.”

Many circumstances combined to introduce his music besides the bewitching nature of its movement—such a contrast to the slow, dragging movement of the preceding singing of the slow chorals. He was a zealous patriot, and great friend of the greater patriot, Samuel Adams, who was also an ardent lover of music. Adams and the late Rev. Dr. Pierce, of Brookline, used to stand side by side in the choir of the Old South Church, Boston, and in concerts.

Patriotic songs had been unknown in this country till this period. *Now* (1770–75) the people were ripe for them. Bil-

lings procured or composed words combining religion and patriotism; and the single tune of *Chester*, with the following words attached, became a mighty power to excite the spirit of resistance to oppressive regal power:

“ Let tyrants shake their iron rod,  
And slavery clank her galling chains;  
We'll fear them not, we'll trust in God —  
New England's God forever reigns.

“ The foe comes on with haughty stride;  
Our troops advance with martial noise:  
Their veterans flee before our arms,  
And generals yield to beardless boys.”

These words and this tune were learned by every choir, by every child in every family, and were sung in city and country, in field and forest, and did more than any one thing else to inspire the spirit of independence in those critical times before and during the Revolutionary War.

Billings had so much originality and native talent, whatever may be said of his defects in other directions, that many of his melodies and some of his tunes, in almost their original form, will outlive thousands of more modern airs. There is so much merit in some of his airs, or melodies, that some of the greatest masters of Europe have been heard to say that if they could write an air like some of his, they should consider their names immortalized. The introduction of his fugue tunes into a congregation effectually broke up the “lining off” process wherever it still lingered; for it would be simply impossible to pursue it with such a convoluted convolution and processional tramp of words and melodies. This much of good, at least, came of their use. Yet notwithstanding their apparent variety, there is a *sameness felt* in their positive peculiarity, so distinct from everything else, that they soon tire, when they become exclusive or predominant in use. Their popularity was therefore temporary, though they constitute a variety which every choir should occasionally employ. They retained their place for a generation; and our Stoughton



Society is likely to perpetuate a certain love of them for generations to come. They abounded in minor keys, almost equally with the major, and expressed well both plaintive and joyous emotions.

[Specimens sung by the choir, as before: *Complaint*, minor; *Invitation*, major; *Dying Christian*; Anthem.]

But another special objection to the fugue tunes was, and is, that to very many minds they are a curiosity and amusement rather than an inspiration to devotion; and therefore many thoughtful minds craved for tunes more solid, sweet, and purely churchly, with melodies, harmony, and time better adapted to express, with simple directness, the emotions of the heart, too profoundly occupied with its worship to relish a curiosity of musical movement.

One peculiarity of sacred song, which prevailed for at least a hundred years, in the history of this Church, and everywhere else in the Reformed churches, was the great number and frequent use of minor tunes. I have found fifty-four minors in a book containing only about one hundred tunes, published in 1811. Some of them are very rich and impressive in melody and harmony, and it is an unspeakable loss that they are so seldom used at the present day. In some hymn and tune-books I have failed to find a full minor like *Burford*, or *Martyrs*, or *Bangor*, in a list of three hundred tunes.

[*Burford* was here sung.]

The *Village Harmony* followed Billings's books, but was not sufficiently distinct from them to satisfy the tastes and views of the more cultured minds. The successive editions of the *Bridgewater Collection* had a great influence throughout this whole region in raising the standard of song, and providing tunes of a truly dignified and devout character. The first edition was published in 1802, and it went through twenty-four editions up to 1834.

Lowell Mason's influence came in next, and continued for

more than forty years, and is still felt throughout the land. His books were used more than any or all others, after they began to be published, until his death; and in the *Sabbath Hymn and Tune-Book*, as well as in other books, are still largely in use. One of his best efforts has been the composition of several hymn anthems, wherein is a succession of melodies and harmonies, and changes of time and key from major to minor and back again, in order to express more completely the varying sentiment of the differing stanzas. He was very successful in this direction — a direction wherein lies a field open for future usefulness and renown for other composers. One of his most delightful and impressive endeavors of this kind is the hymn anthem beginning with the words,

“ Plunged in a gulf of dark despair,”

the singing of which shows at once how much finer the effect is than it is to repeat the *same* strains to verses differing so greatly in their emotional character.

Mr. Mason published many *chants* in his tune-books, and finally a *Book of Chants*, which had large use in many churches, but never came into any considerable use in others, which thereby brought a great loss upon themselves — a loss which I take occasion to express the hope will be made up by their more frequent use in the future. And I invite the choir to sing one of the most absolutely simple chants, to show how expressive their skillful and tasteful use may be.

[23d Psalm, Chant in *Carmina Sacra*, was then given.]

#### INSTRUMENTS.

In the early history of this, as well as nearly every other church in New England, no instruments whatever were used in public worship. Some directions in some of the early psalm-books imply that they did not use even a pitch-pipe or tuning-fork, and had to rely on the uncertain guess or intuition of the tuner, who often led them astray. Instruments had

been so prominent in loudness in the Papal and national churches, and especially the organ had been so much employed in response to the priest at the Papal altar sounding out his unknown Latin, that all their dislike of Papal doctrine and parade was transferred to the instrument itself. This antipathy prevailed throughout the land, and has not yet ceased in some branches of the Christian Church. A Scotch minister has recently called an organ "a box of whistles;" and during this very summer the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church has been discussing the question of the introduction of musical instruments into church service.

The town of Berkeley was named after Bishop Berkeley. In response to the compliment, the good bishop sent them over an organ for their church. They called a town-meeting to see what action the town would take as to its reception. After due discussion, they sent (for substance) the following communication: "Believing an organ a snare of the devil to entrap unwary souls, we respectfully decline to receive it." It was afterward given to an Episcopal Church in Newport, R. I.

Finally, some kind of a gauge to the voice was so obvious a necessity that wooden pitch-pipes came into general use. They are as rarely to be found at present as the psalm-books preceding Watts. It was not till toward the close of the last century that musical instruments were brought into church use in this town. The bass-viol first, then the double-bass, played successively by Martin Hudson, Joseph Whitcomb, James Madison French, and Alfred Whitcomb, who still plays it when it is used; then the clarionet, the flute, and at length the violin. These various instruments were generally well played, often very finely—even the violin so skillfully as to reconcile almost all minds to its use—till the present organ was procured, which, by its power and numerous stops, has superseded them all, and has done it so well that I doubt not the good Quaker would be satisfied who, when his neighbor-

ing Church were trying their new organ, slipped in to hear it too, and, when rallied upon the point that *he* should be listening to an organ, replied, "If thee will worship God by machinery, I want to know that thee has a good one."

#### SINGING-SCHOOLS.

Singing-schools, so common in this century, were almost unknown before 1800. The first known in this town was taught by Capt. Elisha Wales in East Randolph in 1800. In 1801 and 1802 Isaac Alden taught in the old Turner Tavern; Jacob Whitcomb at various times, and probably in both parts of the town; and it is likewise true that most of the leaders of the choir, Nathaniel Hunt, Lieut. Samuel Thayer, and Ansel Hudson, taught at different times. Mr. Nathaniel Shaw, from Abington, was a distinguished singer in his day. He it was who placed the voices on their appropriate parts. Before his day the air was sung by men's voices, the tenor by the women, as it was regarded an immodest presumption for women to take the leading part. This, like almost every step of advance, was a point of difficulty, and occasioned much disturbance. Some men were unwilling to give up the air, and some women who had been accustomed to sing the tenor were unwilling to sing the air, and continued to sing the tenor during their musical lives. Mr. Shaw first trained pupils in this town on the intervals of the scales, and taught them the exact import of flats and sharps and the signatures of different keys. He was a prominent singer in this part of the State; for when the Neponset Musical Society, embracing members from Abington, Weymouth, Randolph, Milton, Braintree, Quincy, and Dorchester, was formed, he was chosen leader. He was teaching when Rev. Mr. Pomeroy was installed, and sang on that occasion under the leading of Lieut. Samuel Thayer. Henry Thayer was an acceptable and efficient teacher in and out of the town for a number of years — *i. e.*, between 1825 and 1840. He was distinguished for a full, clear, and smooth voice. John B. Thayer, the present

leader of the Choral Club, has been an efficient promoter of sacred song. Lyman F. Brackett, the present organist and leader of the Church choir, has been raising the standard of attainment by his unwearied drill and rigid demand of exactness of time, tune, and expression.

Mr. Marcus Colburn, from Dorchester, taught for successive seasons in this and the neighboring towns; and by his clear, sweet, yet powerful voice—a voice capable of the lower bass notes, yet reaching with ease and sweetness the highest notes of the air—gave a conception of what the human voice could do which few persons had before. He had great genius in imparting boldness and enthusiasm in effort to reach a higher degree of art. He was persistent in his faithfulness of drill, till his conception of art was reached by his pupils. His influence is still felt. It was a loss to New England when he transferred his residence and work to New York city.

#### LEADERS.

So far as I have been able to learn them, their names were: Capt. Elisha Wales, 20 years; Samuel Linfield; Jacob Whitcomb; Nathaniel Hunt; Lieut. Samuel Thayer; Ansel Hudson; Henry Thayer; David Burrell, 20 years; Solomon L. White; Horace Niles; Gilman Leeds; Ephraim Mann; John B. Thayer; Samuel Capen; Lyman F. Brackett, present organist and leader.

#### TUNE-BOOKS.

The chief tune-books, since any have been used at all—tunes in the Psalm-Book being used before—are *Village Harmony*; *Bridgewater Collection*, the later editions being called *Temple Carmina*; *Handel and Haydn Society's Collection*; *Stoughton Collection*, 1828; *Boston Academy Collection*, 1833; *Carmina Sacra*, 1843; *Psalmody*; and beyond this, too many to mention.

The Stoughton Society and the Choral Club have kept up a lively interest in sacred music in the town, and have been of

immense value to the service of song in the house of the Lord. For one hundred years there has been no lack of numbers and skillful voices and instruments. The choirs fifty years ago were *greater in number*, though of less art; and on Thanksgiving Day, especially, gave such a display of musical effort as to call out a full house, and receive themselves such an impulse by previous drill as to improve the singing for many months. May the good time return.

The Choral Club—about seventy-five in number—have now attained such strength and skill in art that they can perform such oratorios and cantatas as *Belshazzar's Feast* and *Esther*, to the delight of all who hear.

NOTE.—I have been informed by Mr. David Burrell that the first band of martial music in the State was formed in this town, and, after varied fortunes, finally sold its charter to a company who style themselves the Boston Brigade Band, and who thereby claim to be still the oldest band in the State.

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#### Anniversary Choirs.

In connection with the address on music, the names of the persons composing the regular Church Choir at the time of this Anniversary are here recorded :

*Organist and director*—LYMAN F. BRACKETT. *Soprano voices*—Mrs. William Porter, Mrs. Samuel A. Capen, Miss Emma C. Belcher, Miss Edith A. Leach, Miss Annie B. Bullock, Miss Sarah C. Belcher. *Alto voices*—Mrs. Mary E. Alden, Miss E. Lilla Burrill, Miss Nellie E. Bullock. *Tenor voices*—Samuel A. Capen, William Porter, Ephraim Mann, Isaac Niles, Dr. F. C. Granger. *Bass voices*—George B. Bryant, Daniel B. White, Winslow Battles, Benjamin Belcher, Gustavus Thayer.

The Chorus Choir, organized especially for the singing of old-time music on this occasion, occupied the large gallery opposite the pulpit, and was composed of the following persons :



*Conductor* — JOHN BERRY THAYER. *Soprano voices* — Mrs. William H. Howe, Mrs. N. C. Berry, Mrs. H. C. Alden, Mrs. Ephraim Mann, Mrs. Hiram Wilde, Mrs. Charles C. Farnham, Mrs. George H. Nichols, Mrs. Nelson Mann, Mrs. Herbert A. Howard, Mrs. John Warren Belcher, Mrs. Henry A. Belcher, Mrs. Francis A. Belcher, Mrs. Daniel B. White, Mrs. G. T. Breitling, Mrs. William H. Balkam, Jr., Mrs. Emerson A. Leach, Miss Georgia M. Hawes, Miss Mary Wales French, Miss Eleanor Belcher. *Alto voices* — Mrs. J. White Belcher, Mrs. Cyrus N. Thayer, Mrs. Wales B. Thayer, Mrs. John May, Mrs. George Baker, Mrs. Royal French, Mrs. Dexter Clark, Mrs. Melvine Clark, Miss Minnie W. Corliss, Miss Maria L. Corliss, Miss Sarah V. Wild. *Tenor voices* — Solomon L. White, Nelson Mann, Frank Bodwell, Lucius W. Payne, Lucius H. Packard, L. Morton Packard, Marcus Perkins, Edwin M. Lovering, Emerson A. Leach, Franklin Badger. *Bass voices* — David Burrell, John May, David W. Tucker, William Clark, Isaac French, Moses Whitcomb, Allen A. Belcher, Linus Belcher, Wales French, Dr. C. C. Farnham, Royal French, Cyrus N. Thayer, Wales B. Thayer, John Broderick, Thomas West, Daniel H. Huxford, Arthur C. Wadsworth. *Orchestra* — Alfred W. Whitcomb, Sidney French, Henry French, George B. Bryant, Charles Bryant, Charles H. Howard, Jr.

## A Sketch of the Ancient "Precinct," the Modern Parish, and the Town.

BY HON. J. WHITE BELCHER.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: Having listened with pleasure to the interesting, instructive, and eloquent remarks of the gentlemen who have preceded me during the day and evening, had I followed my own inclination I should still remain a listener, rather than attempt to add anything to what has already been said in the observance of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the formation of this Church.

The subject which has been assigned me affords so wide a range for thought and consideration, covering a period of written and traditional history for more than one hundred and fifty years, that, for want of time, many important matters must necessarily be omitted, while only brief allusion can be made to others. But, standing before you in the discharge of my duty at the present time, I must say it is always with feelings of honest pride, as well as of responsibility, that I speak for the town of Randolph, and of its relation to those principles and institutions which are and always have been the foundation of good government and the well-being of society. For I believe, so far as my knowledge and information extend, that, from the date of the first settlement of this town to the present time, no more moral, honest, industrious, or intelligent community has existed in any city, town, precinct, or parish in this Commonwealth, according to its population, than that within our own borders. I do not wish,

however, to be understood as conveying the impression that I believe there have been no wrongs here which ought to have been righted; but I do believe the wrongs which may have existed here have existed, to a greater or less extent, in every other community.

The occasion which has called us together today carries us back to events which transpired and to men who lived one hundred and fifty years ago; and, although we are surrounded by so many pleasant associations, enjoyments, and privileges, and after all that has been said today, cannot we picture to ourselves for a moment the character of those early settlers, their surroundings, their trials and sufferings, their means, their wants, when the first settlement was here made in 1712, and when the first rude habitation was here erected, in an unbroken wilderness, near the spot where we are now assembled?

History informs us that the pioneers in the settlement of this new country had to contend with great difficulties. Obstacles met them at every step. Their means of communication with other settlements, and their facilities for acquiring knowledge, were exceedingly limited. A wilderness was before them to subdue, savage enemies to watch and resist. They had to encounter perils and overcome hardships in many forms. Their examples of patience and perseverance, of energy and endurance, are worthy of imitation in the attainment of every great object.

It would be interesting, if time permitted, to go back before parishes and townships were established, to 1614, and examine the history of the region we now inhabit, as a part of the six Eastern States, when Capt. John Smith first gave them the name of New England; and when the forests—where are now the cities, towns, and villages throughout our own Commonwealth, so beautiful and attractive—were inhabited by more than thirty thousand Massachusetts Indians; or to 1625, when Capt. Wollaston came over from England with about thirty others, and began a plantation in what is now Quincy, and gave it the name of Wollaston, subsequently

called Merry Mount, and Mount Dagan, more recently Mount Wollaston or Wollaston Heights, of which Randolph was originally a part, and which was the second permanent settlement by civilized men in New England, the other being at Plymouth.

Although the written history from 1625 to 1640 is incomplete, and the traditional history somewhat contradictory, yet they are sufficient to convince us that the early settlers were but the pioneers preparatory to the organization of a permanent township. In the year 1634 Mount Wollaston was annexed, by order of the General Court, to the town of Boston.

Passing over many other important matters from the time of the first settlement at Wollaston, we find the people had made some effort to be incorporated as a separate town; and from the records it appears that, on May 13, 1640, at a general court of election held at Boston, the petition of the inhabitants of Mount Wollaston was "voted and granted them to be a town," to be called Braintree, named from a village in Essex County, England, and meaning a town near a river, which was the Monatiquot. It included the territory now lying in Quincy, Braintree, Randolph, and Holbrook. The present town of Braintree constituted the middle precinct, Quincy the north, and Randolph the south precinct. Most of the early history refers to the territory lying in Braintree and Quincy until the south precinct was established. There were certain grants of land made to parties after the incorporation of the town of Braintree, to people living in the territory of Boston, whose names appear in the old descriptions of the town, and which grants were exempted from the common charges incident to the township, causing much dissatisfaction to the people of the town. Bendall's farm was of this character, and was probably the tract of land granted in July, 1641, to one Edward Bendall.

It is described as lying in the westerly part of Randolph, between the site of the present Congregational meeting-house on the south and the Baptist meeting-house on the north.

This farm comprised four hundred acres — about one fifteenth part of the whole territory of our present town. According to the custom of those times, the purchaser of a parcel of land actually went upon the premises and took into his possession a “turf of the land and a twig of the trees” growing thereon, in addition to the deed of conveyance.

Braintree was voted a distinct parish November 3, 1708, and confirmed by the General Court soon after. Randolph, the southerly portion of the new south precinct in Braintree, having increased in population, the inhabitants petitioned to be set off as a distinct parish, which was granted January 5, 1728, but a few years prior to the formation of this Church, whose one hundred and fiftieth anniversary we observe to-day. The south precinct, now Randolph and Holbrook, was described as Quocheco, Cochato, and afterward Scadding — probably names transmitted by some of the Indian tribes.

From this time commenced here the union of Church and State, or the precinct and parish; that is to say, the precinct and the parish were one, and whatever matters related to the welfare of the parish also related to the welfare of the precinct. The parish business was transacted at a precinct meeting, and the precinct business was transacted at a parish meeting, it being one and the same.

The first precinct or parish meeting of which there is any record was held January 21, 1728, at which no business of importance was transacted. March 19, 1728, a second meeting was held, and John Niles, Jr., was chosen moderator; Isaac Newcomb, clerk; Thomas Wales, treasurer; John Niles, Jr., Benjamin Hayward, and Thomas Wales, assessors. Moses Curtis and Joseph Wales were chosen a committee “to agree with a minister.” It was voted to raise sixty-five pounds for the support of the ministry, and thirty pounds for the payment of services in the past, and ten pounds for necessary precinct expenses.

April 20, 1730, at a precinct meeting, Thomas Wales was elected to hold the contribution-box for one year. It was also

voted that the precinct purchase a law-book; Samuel Bass was chosen a committee for that purpose. The usual business transacted at precinct meetings was in relation to selecting or providing for a minister, building or repairing the meeting-house, making provision for schools and precinct expenses, establishing boundary lines, and the like. The appropriations were not large, but in those days to many the assessments were quite burdensome.

The town government in our day, consisting of the selectmen, trustees, and school committee; the State government, consisting of the legislative and executive departments; the national government, consisting of the two branches of Congress and the Chief Magistrate, with the various executive departments, are but the outgrowth of the precinct and parish system of one hundred and fifty years ago.

You have been told today that the first meeting-house in this parish was erected in the year 1727. A few days ago I read in one of the daily papers an extract from a sermon preached recently in Boston, wherein it stated that the erection of a meeting-house in any place means civilization, intelligence, morality, and religion. Such a statement was as true one hundred and fifty years ago as it is today, and no town or community can become prosperous and continue so without these essential elements.

As early as 1728 there was an effort made to divide the town of Braintree, which was unsuccessful; but sixty-two years later the people of the first parish gave their attention seriously to the subject, and in 1792 the north precinct of the old town of Braintree was incorporated into a distinct town by the name of Quincy, while John Hancock was governor of Massachusetts and Samuel Adams was lieutenant-governor. It was named in honor of Col. John Quincy, who had previously been the owner of the Mount Wollaston farm, which had given the first civilized name to the place. Omitting that which relates to Braintree and Quincy, I will speak only of what relates to the south precinct, now Randolph and Holbrook.



As early as 1729 the south precinct voted to petition the General Court for a township, to include a gore or tract of land that was a part of Stoughton, and so running to the partition line. A committee was chosen to treat with the Haywards, who lived on said land; and unless that gore of land could be obtained, it was voted not to become a township. Being unsuccessful in obtaining it, the project was given up for a time; but, after much delay and opposition, on March 9, 1793, the south precinct of Braintree was incorporated as an independent township by the name of Randolph, in honor of Hon. Peyton Randolph, of Virginia, president of the first Congress of the Confederation. I wish the boys who are present this evening and who are now ten years of age — an age in life without much care or responsibility — to remember that when they reach the age of manhood and citizenship in the centennial year of the incorporation of this town, but eleven years from the ninth day of March next, upon them and others will devolve the duty of seeing that the event is not forgotten or allowed to pass unnoticed, but that it is observed in a manner appropriate for such an occasion.

March 6, 1794, the first meeting of the parish was held for the transaction of parish business only, and the parish and town meetings have been separate ever since. Randolph at this time was a part of Suffolk County, Norfolk County not being incorporated until seventeen days after Randolph became a town.

The first town meeting was held April 1, 1793, in accordance with a provision contained in the act of incorporation. It was called by Samuel Niles, Esq., a justice of the peace — an office of no small importance in those early days. From the year 1793 to 1814 the town meetings were held in Rev. Jonathan Strong's meeting-house, and subsequent to that time in the meeting-house, or vestry, which stood upon this spot, until the erection of a town house.

Dr. Ephraim Wales was chosen to preside at the first meet-

ing of the town. The first vote passed was that all persons elected to any town office should serve without pay, which system prevailed for several years. Dr. Ebenezer Alden, the father of Dr. Alden recently deceased, whose wise counsels and Christian example are still fresh in our minds, and Joseph White, Jr., and Micah White, Jr., were elected the first selectmen, assessors, and overseers of the poor. Richard Thayer, Edward Faxon, Luther French, and Ebenezer Crane were elected tithing-men, whose duty it was to preserve order in the church during divine service, to make complaint of any disorderly conduct, and to enforce the observance of the Sabbath. The school committee consisted of seven persons: Eliphalet Sawin, Dr. Ebenezer Alden, Ichabod Holbrook, Elisha Wales, Samuel Linfield, Lott White, and Benjamin Mann. Seth Turner, Jr., was chosen constable and collector of taxes. A committee was chosen to divide the powder and balls with Braintree; also to build a powder-house. At a meeting held the same day for the election of State officers, John Hancock received seventy-five out of eighty votes cast for governor, and Samuel Adams received fifty-three out of fifty-four votes for lieutenant-governor. Samuel Bass, Esq., was elected the first representative to the General Court from Randolph.

In 1811, at a town meeting, Col. Seth Turner was chosen a committee to unite with another committee from Braintree and Quincy to find the old town books of the former town of Braintree, and deposit said books in the hands and possession of some trusty person. After diligent inquiry for the past few weeks, I have been unable to discover who that trusty person was.

There was a committee chosen, and continued for several years, to investigate what rights the town of Randolph had in the herring fishery in Braintree. The committee consisted of Col. Seth Turner, Samuel Bass, and Samuel Niles. In the records I find no report or decision as to the result of their investigation, and Randolph may still have rights in that enterprise.

I hold in my hand the original record of the first assessment of taxes made in Randolph eighty-eight years ago, amounting to one hundred and eighty-nine pounds, seventeen shillings and fourpence. It contains but eight pages, of twenty lines each.

In 1794 the amount raised by taxation was fifty pounds for schools, and three hundred pounds for reducing the town debt and payment of other expenses. In 1795 fifty pounds was raised for schools, and fifty pounds for town expenses. In 1800 \$500 was raised for town expenses, and \$305 for schools. In the year 1801, and for several years afterward, it was voted not to send a representative to the General Court. Any person could vote who was twenty-one years of age, having a freehold estate within the Commonwealth of an annual income of three pounds, or any estate of the value of sixty pounds. The school money was divided by families.

In 1802 \$700 was raised for town expenses, and \$300 for schools. In 1804 \$700 was appropriated for town expenses, and \$350 for schools; in 1811, \$600 for town expenses, and \$500 for schools; in 1812, \$500 for town expenses, and \$500 for schools. In 1814 it was voted that the thanks of the town be presented to Micah White, Esq., for having presented the town with twenty-five dollars as a part of his compensation as representative to the General Court. He was reëlected, of course, and the following year he gave thirty dollars. In 1816 \$1,000 was raised for town expenses, and \$600 for schools, which amount has gradually increased year by year, amounting in 1880 to \$29,000 for town expenses, and \$10,000 for schools.

From the time of the first settlement of the town to the present, much attention has been given to the education of the young. Our ancestors never lost sight of the advantages to be gained in this direction. Among the earliest records of this precinct and town are those which relate to the establishment and maintenance of schools. Particular mention is made of the fact that Braintree in its early days was distinguished for its free schools.

The first direct payment by the town for the services of a school-teacher was April 2, 1770. Prior to that time a committee from the south precinct drew its proportion of the school money from the town treasury, which amounted annually to about twenty pounds.

I have been informed that the first school-house in this precinct was built about the time of the erection of the first meeting-house, in 1727, and was located on land belonging to the precinct on what is now North Street, and near the present residence of Dr. Farnham. After being in use for many years, it was sold and removed to the open field south of the present residence of Col. Eleazar Beal, and, after being enlarged, was occupied as a dwelling until within a few years, when it was taken down. Some, however, believe it was the second school-house that was so removed which was erected in 1737. Its dimensions were sixteen by twenty feet, and one story high. It was several years after its erection before it was furnished with a table or benches. The instruction given in the schools when first established was confined almost exclusively to reading and spelling, repeating the catechism, writing, and arithmetic. The principal textbooks used were the *New England Primer*, *Dilworth's Spelling-Book*, the *New Testament*, and *Bonycastle's Arithmetic*. Once each week the scholars were allowed to choose sides for spelling.

In 1744 it was voted that the people on the Cochato side of the river have five pounds of the school money for the use of a school to be kept on that side of the river; in 1746 it was increased to eight pounds.

At the present time I know of no towns more generous in their appropriations for educational purposes, and also in making liberal provision for all necessary municipal expenses, than the towns which constituted the original town of Braintree. The liberal provision made and the different avenues provided for educating the young in our own town are ample for every individual.

In addition to the annual tax levied on property, the first *donation made* was for educational purposes, by one William

Coddington, who came to this country from England (with Governor Winthrop and about thirty others). He was a man much respected, and of good estate. He was one of the first who received grants of land at Quincy when Mount Wollaston formed a part of the town of Boston; but he entertained peculiar religious principles, and in consequence thereof was forced to leave the colony, and removed to Rhode Island. Believing the act was accomplished in consequence of the ignorance of the people, he gave a large tract of land containing one hundred and twenty-five acres, the income of which to be expended for the benefit of public schools, in order that future generations might reap the benefit of a liberal education, and thus see the folly of excommunicating from society individuals for their honest religious opinions. The income arising from this bequest has been used for educational purposes from that day to this. As new townships have been set off, each has received its share. What effect his contribution has had in this community in carrying out his object, after eighty-eight years' experience, you can determine as well as myself. The last year the income from the Coddington fund in this town amounted to one hundred dollars.

In 1833 the Randolph Academy, which some of our friends who are present today well remember as their *alma mater*, with all its pleasant associations, was erected by private contribution, for the benefit of scholars in this town and vicinity, and was a useful and prosperous institution for many years.

In 1842 Hon. Amasa Stetson, a native of Randolph, gave to this town the building which stands opposite to this, for town purposes, and in addition thereto the sum of ten thousand dollars, the income to be devoted for the maintenance of a high school, to be kept in said building, for the advantage of the youth in pursuing the higher departments of education. Under its present efficient management, with its competent and faithful instructors, it needs no words of commendation from me in its behalf.

In 1872 General Sylvanus Thayer, of Braintree, made liberal

provision for the erection of a school building, and the support of a school of a high grade, for the benefit of scholars residing in Braintree, Quincy, Randolph, and Holbrook, where all having proper qualifications may be admitted free of charge. The institution was opened to pupils September 12, 1877, and thus far has been a decided success.

In 1875 the heirs of the late Royal Turner, who was one of our most respected citizens, whose long life of usefulness and whose purity of character many present will remember, gave to the town of Randolph the sum of fifty thousand dollars for the erection of a library building and the establishment of a free public library, which contains today seven thousand three hundred and eighty-one volumes. The various provisions made to which I have alluded, with a liberal appropriation annually made by the town for educational purposes, ought to place Randolph second to no town in this Commonwealth.

For many years after the incorporation of the town the highways were repaired by a tax assessed and payable in labor at four shillings a day before the first day of July, and three shillings a day after that date; which system, not proving economical for the town, was soon abandoned.

The poor, although small in numbers, were usually let out to the lowest bidder, the average price being about fifty cents per week.

For more than forty years after the first settlement of this town there was no resident physician, and history informs us the health of the people was remarkably good. We are informed that Randolph at the date of its incorporation was a quiet agricultural community, containing one hundred and thirty or one hundred and forty families, and not far from seven hundred inhabitants. Such was their confidence in each other, that no burglar-alarms were thought necessary, very few bolting the doors of their dwellings overnight; which system, if proved safe, would be an improvement on the one we have been obliged to adopt one hundred years later.



A painted house was an unusual sight. A carpet on the floor was rarely seen. Tallow candles, of domestic manufacture, were used for lights. The great and little wheel, winders and loom were found in every family. Flax and wool furnished the raw material, and each house was a manufactory in which it was woven into substantial fabrics for the use of its inmates.

The state of the roads would not permit the use of wheel carriages. No communication was had with many of the neighboring settlements, except through the woods by bridle-paths. Every farmer was his own mechanic; every nail was made by hand. Stone was used for building chimneys, with clay-mortar for a cement. Glass was not common, but a kind of mica-slate was used as a substitute.

The principal road to Boston was through Braintree and Quincy to Milton Mills, thence through Dorchester and Roxbury. The pathway at that time through the Blue Hills was exceedingly circuitous and nearly impassable.

What would our ancestors think, today, to pass up or down these beautiful streets, and see these comfortable homes; such extensive and prosperous manufactories; these cleared fields; the iron ties which bind town to city; such comfortable and commodious churches, where all are invited to enter; such well-ordered and well-directed institutions in every department? Or of their being conveyed from Randolph to Boston in less than thirty minutes, and reading the morning paper containing the news transmitted from the four quarters of the globe, and which transpired but a few hours before? Or witnessing an electric light illuminating a whole township, or by the aid of the telephone holding a private conversation with their friends fifty miles away before partaking of their morning meal? The great improvements made, and the wonderful inventions now in successful operation, have not been the work of a day or a year, but commenced generations ago, the foundations of which were laid by our ancestors, and they only tell of the progress made in the first one hundred and

fifty years. Who can realize what these words, "one hundred and fifty years," contain and suggest? Who can realize the amount of civil, political, and religious experience which has accumulated in this century and a half, and which has passed to us as an inheritance from our fathers, to be preserved and perpetuated by us?

In the year 1704 the first printed newspaper in America was published in Boston, and called the *Boston News-Letter*. Its circulation each week was about one hundred copies. I hold in my hand a *fac-simile* copy of the first number, published one hundred and seventy-seven years ago. There are at the present time more than one hundred and twenty-five papers published, daily, weekly, and monthly, in Boston alone; some with a daily circulation of from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand copies each.

In 1857 the first newspaper in Randolph was published, under the name of the *Randolph Transcript and Advertiser*, with a circulation of two hundred copies. Under different editors and proprietors and names it has continued to the present time, and is now issued in an enlarged and improved form, with a circulation of one thousand copies each week.

The manufactures in Randolph have steadily increased from a few thousand dollars annually to as many millions at the present time, and the valuation of the town increases year by year.

In 1872 the easterly portion of Randolph was set off and incorporated under the name of Holbrook, in honor of one of its most respected citizens. Although the old town regretted to part with so goodly a portion of her people and so large a portion of her territory, yet we congratulate her citizens that, after an existence of only nine years, the new town of Holbrook is today one of the most enterprising and prosperous towns in the Commonwealth.

Having thus briefly alluded to some of the important events relating to this precinct while a part of the town of Braintree; also from the time separation commenced from the old town,

and Randolph became a distinct township, it only remains for me to speak of the parish of modern times, and, to speak from my own knowledge, I must confine my remarks strictly to the parish I now represent, whose history and experience I doubt not is the history and experience of many parishes throughout New England. Its record has been simple, but comprehensive. From 1793 to the present time, officers and committees have annually been chosen to conduct its affairs. Provision has been made for all necessary expenses. All payments by members of this parish have been cheerfully and promptly made. Whenever the requirements demanded the erection of a new meeting-house, or the repairing and improving of one already erected, all have united in the enterprise, from the commencement to its completion. The hand of charity has never been withheld from any worthy object. Nothing has occurred, within my knowledge, to change the annual routine of parish business, except when a communication has been received from our minister, suggesting a reduction of his salary, which suggestion the parish have promptly acted upon, and, by a unanimous vote, refused to comply with.

I trust I shall do no wrong, or exceed my duties, if, on this occasion, I disclose some matters connected with the financial condition of this Society, and which are of some importance to a parish in modern times. Without entering into the history of the various funds given and accumulated for the benefit of this parish, in addition to the income from the church fund of which mention has already been made, the investment known as the Ministerial Fund amounts today at its market value to \$9,300; the Wales Fund amounts to \$5,000—a donation made by Hon. Jonathan Wales, who always took a deep interest in this Church and parish, and whose exemplary life and character it is pleasant to remember. The Parsonage Fund, the cash portion of the same at the present time, amounts to \$3,300. The remaining portion of said fund has been expended for the purchase of the valuable

estate, next south from this building, for a parsonage, but thus far has not been occupied as such.

In closing, I cannot let this opportunity pass without speaking of the kind feeling always manifested and often expressed by the people of this town toward this Church and parish; and from the time of the settlement of the first minister here to the present time, with hardly a single exception, nothing has occurred to mar the harmony and good feeling between the minister, the Church, and the parish. And I say it without flattery to any one, or fear of contradiction, that from the time our present pastor commenced his duties here, a little more than fifteen years ago, the friendship and respect extended to him then has increased year by year, and today we cannot but renew our thanks, as a Church, as a parish, and a town, that in early manhood a kind Providence directed him here. And may many years of usefulness in the future, as in the past, yet remain for him, and the friendship, respect, and harmony now existing still continue.

As we link the present with the past, we are witnesses today, on this anniversary occasion, what one hundred and fifty-four years as a parish, one hundred and fifty years as a Church, and eighty-eight years as a town, have done for us. The institutions which were founded by our ancestors and transmitted to us have been perpetuated and extended and enlarged, and our hearts cannot but swell with gratitude to the great Father of all, for his wonderful gifts to the children of men.

At the close of the hymn following the preceding address, the pastor of the Church invited the attention of the audience to informal addresses from several gentlemen. With cordial greeting he first welcomed to the platform EDWARD A. STRONG, Esq., of Boston, a grandson of Rev. Dr. Jonathan Strong.

**Address of Edward A. Strong, Esq.**

REVEREND SIR AND GOOD FRIENDS: I am glad both by presence and by voice to testify to my interest in this occasion. In our country, and even in this older part of it, one hundred and fifty years is indeed a goodly age to celebrate, and approaches to a real antiquity. The centennial period through which we have so lately passed, with its numerous local and general assemblies, has done much, I think, to foster in our people a reverence for the past, and to enable us to realize more deeply what we owe to our fathers—to the men who first broke this rugged soil, chose the sites of these towns and settled them, built the first school-houses and organized these churches, fought for and won our liberty, laid thus the foundations of our civil institutions and cemented them with their blood, planted the seeds which have sprung up into the flowers and fruits of this modern civilization which we, too often forgetful of their share in the original work, so richly enjoy.

To us in New England the celebration of the founding of a Church has peculiar significance, and demands special recognition, because in the olden time the Church was in such a true sense the very heart of the community, whence its best impulses and its most influential movements sprung.

How true was this in the colonial and the revolutionary periods! And this very Church, I doubt not, was not only a spring of spiritual life, but a fountain of loyal and patriotic

fervor as well. This point is emphasized by what was told us in the address, this afternoon, of the promptitude and loyalty of the pastor of this Church in the war of 1812. Such a celebration as this therefore appeals to us on many grounds, both as Christians and as citizens.

I have somewhere read this sentiment, that "he who is not proud of his ancestors shows either that he had no ancestors to be proud of, or else that he is a degenerate son." For myself I count it a high honor to be in the line of one who, as its minister, served this Church and parish from 1789 to 1814, thus giving his entire mature life to what I conceive to be the highest form of human service. Cut off in the prime of life—at fifty, so that his youngest son but dimly remembered him—to his grandchildren and their children has resulted that irreparable loss which comes from the scanty memorials and slender traditions of an abbreviated life. No portrait preserves him, save that which imagination may print upon the "mind's eye."

Identified as I have been, from my earliest manhood, with the industries of this town, and hence a frequent visitor, I have rarely passed up this street without looking toward what remains of the old parsonage, and trying to picture the stalwart form of my grandfather, as he went in and out and walked these roads, in the ministries of the country parson of the olden time. And when I came to the meeting-house, I have sought to reproduce that older one where he preached, and to catch an echo from the distant past of his sonorous voice, as he pressed home an argument, or, with earnest appeal, lifted up the cross of the Redeemer.

If he was robust in the pulpit on Sunday, as has been recorded of him, I have remembered to have heard that he could swing a scythe on Monday with a stroke as vigorous as any of his farmer parishioners; and though, like many another country parson, he may have been "passing rich with forty pounds a year," I count it no discredit that he tilled some of these fields while he labored chiefly for a harvest of souls.



But, sir, I have more than passed the boundary of those few words you desired from me, as representative of that family of my grandfather which during a period of twenty-five years was so dear and important to this Church and parish.

The families of the last century! How shall I, in closing, speak a word of them? How better, perhaps, than to recall, as typical of numberless others, the mother of this family, Joanna Odiorne, the wife of Dr. Strong, whom it is my privilege to remember quite distinctly? Possessed of simple tastes and frugal habits, a clear intellect and sound judgment, an affectionate and sympathizing spirit and an unwavering faith in God, she was not only an ideal minister's wife, but an ideal ancestress, whom many generations may well revere.

And such were the virtues which characterized so many of the families of our fathers. We cannot easily measure what we owe to them, since so much is due to those subtle influences of heredity—to that which “runs in the blood” and is “bred in the bone.” We might gain an idea by a negative view. Had it *not* been for their frugality, their self-denials, their rigid virtues, their stern creeds even, upbuilding strong characters, does any one of us believe our development would have been what it is today? If our lives be less simple, let us be sure they are *as* sincere. If our creed be shorter, let us be sure that our reverence is no less. If our benefactions be larger, let us be sure that our charity is *as* fervent. If our country be so much grander now, let us be sure that our patriotism is *as* pure, *as* self-forgetful. We can best pay the debt we owe to our forefathers by surpassing them, even in the virtues in which they excelled.

Regret was expressed that no one was present to respond for the mother Church in Braintree. The pastor said: If it is rather late, tonight, for our aged mother to be out; we take pleasure in the company of our young and interesting daughter, as we may, without too great exactness, entitle the Winthrop Church, of Holbrook; and from her we are now happy to hear, in the person of her pastor, Rev. HERBERT A. LORING.

## Address of Rev. W. A. Loring, of Holbrook.

BROTHER CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS: Most happy am I to be present on this occasion. It is also a privilege and honor to represent the "daughter" — or perhaps more properly the granddaughter — of this Church, though fully conscious that another might do it far better than a comparative stranger.

Allow me, first of all, to say in behalf of the daughter Church that she is not unmindful of her indebtedness to such an ancestry. She desires to prove worthy her heritage. She appreciates most thoroughly and reciprocates most heartily all the kind words spoken of her and the town she has helped to mold.

Time, as it passes on swift wings, kindly obliterates much, the remembrance of which would give pain. It often reverses the judgments of former days, pronouncing them unjust. It reveals more clearly the good. It brings into bold relief the true and noble. It permits to live that which helps, betters, inspires. It sounds the death-knell of that which does not. It ought. Therefore it is with joy that your daughter congratulates you today; not so much because you have attained so great an age, but have reached it by developing in yourself, and others touched by you, so much that lives and deserves to live; yea, that is immortal. One hundred and fifty years is but a small part of man's existence, or even of that of some churches; yet it is time enough for a Church to secure enduring honor, far more than enough to bring lasting disgrace upon itself. It is a vast stretch when measured, not by years, but by seed sown and harvests reaped, by struggles endured and sacrifices made, by battles fought and victories won for God and his truth. These alone make the hoary head a crown of glory. To us, with less than twenty-five years of varying record behind us, you look old and venerable indeed. We love you not less, but more, because of your years. We honor you, not because you have reached your one hundred and fiftieth birthday simply, but because

your years have been those of noble toil for the Master. We rejoice to believe you are still young in power to do and achieve. What these past years have wrought, none can tell; for who among us can gather together and turn into one channel the influences which have had their source here, and which have, like the rivulet, broadened into a mighty river, it in turn begetting others? There is, too, an unwritten and sacred history of sacrifice and struggle, of toil and triumph, of peril and prayer, known only to God. The records given us today are but fragments of a history which touches at some point every quarter of the globe. Such history is not the result of chance. It is built. It is made. It is a growth, a plant, a perennial tree, drawing its life up from the earth and down from the heavens, striking its roots deeper and deeper, spreading its branches wider and wider, as time rolls on, and all that it may scatter blessings far and wide on every passing breeze.

So, mother Church, live on; grow young in heart as the years increase. Never become old save in devotion to the glorious old truths so faithfully proclaimed by such men as Drs. Strong and Hitchcock, and so nobly exemplified in the lives of the Waleses, Thayers, Aldens, whose memories are and ever will be fragrant in this Church and region. Live on, writing, making history which shall bless men and honor God and bear the light of eternity itself; for it goes with you to the bar of judgment. If in coming years you must die, may you "come to your grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season." But I will not speak of old age or of dying. For a true Church of God never grows old; it never dies; it is always young; and when its work is done here, it is simply transplanted to fairer climes and richer soil, where its growth is untrammelled, glorious, and eternal.

Reference was made by the pastor to the fact that when the North Baptist Church of Randolph was formed (1819), and for some time afterward, that Church received little sympathy from this. He expressed the most sincere satisfaction that those days had passed away, and that for many a year the two

churches had been drawing more and more closely together, and that now the pastors and the churches were both laboring side by side in warm personal and Christian friendship. The pastor of the Baptist Church was then presented — Rev. JOSEPH C. FOSTER.

**Address of Rev. J. C. Foster.**

I am glad to have an opportunity to express the deep interest which I feel in this interesting occasion, when one hundred and fifty years pass in particular review from the commanding point of observation afforded by this ancient Church. The kind and fraternal words of the pastor, in calling me out for some remarks, are highly appreciated, and the spirit of their utterance is fully reciprocated. Such magnanimity as is indicated by what my brother Labaree has more than once said, today, with reference to another Church than his own, in this town, is commendably in contrast with the words and actions of other days than those in which we live; though, as I am happy to know, there always have been noble exceptions to the prevalence of uncharitableness and unfriendliness among Christians of differing views and practices, in respect to which peculiarities they may all be equally sincere and conscientious. Such an exception was revealed when a prominent Congregational minister in this State, two thirds of a century ago, being in company with an Episcopalian clergyman, showed himself to be more a Christian than a sectarian. The conversation turning upon the news that Adoniram Judson, the missionary, had become a Baptist, the latter said to the former, "So your chickens have turned out ducks;" to which the former magnanimously replied, "Yes; and I should be willing to sit on hens' eggs all my days, if I could hatch such ducks." These preachers were the fathers of the late Rev. Gardiner Spring, D.D., of New York, and the still living Rev. Stephen H. Tyng, D.D., of the same city. Dr. Spring's reply, in the circumstances, was not a little in advance of his times for true nobleness, as are the words of him who presides on this occasion fully abreast with, if not

considerably ahead of his times, for the same cardinal excellence.

In behalf of the neighboring Church which I represent, I heartily congratulate this venerable body, which has so long provided for the preaching of the gospel upon this truly sacred spot, sincerely felicitating the members thereof upon their excellent record, hitherto. It is no ordinary privilege enjoyed by you who celebrate this anniversary, to recall the events of so long a period into which so much that claims a grateful acknowledgment is crowded. This day may be to you like that when Paul, at Appii Forum, "thanked God and took courage."

While recognizing your title to respect on the score of lengthened as well as honorable history, I can properly speak of contemporary Church life by your side during full two thirds of the long time in which you have existed as a religious organization. For more than one hundred years there has been a Baptist Church in Randolph, and it is pleasant to recall the friendly relations which long ago existed between an honored pastor of this Church, Rev. Jonathan Strong, D.D., and Rev. Joel Briggs, who was pastor of the Baptist Church in the south part of the town nearly forty years, from 1787 to 1825. These worthy ministers were personal friends, and in various ways their mutual fellowship was manifested. Mr. Briggs was educated at Brown University, in Providence, R. I., where Mr. Strong received the degree of Doctor of Divinity, in 1808, through the influence, it is said, of his clerical neighbor of the Baptist Church. At the ordination of Mr. Briggs, in this town, in 1787, the president of that college, Rev. James Manning, D.D., preached in the newly erected house for worship, at the dedication of which, three years before, Rev. Samuel Stillman, D.D., of Boston, preached. That Church, after contributing, in 1819, to the formation of the Church now existing in the more northern part of the town, removed its location a short distance, so as to be over the Stoughton line, where it still continues in existence as

the East Stoughton Baptist Church, the centennial anniversary of which was observed September 15, 1880.

During Rev. Dr. Strong's pastorate there were commendable relations maintained between the pastors of these churches, and probably between the churches also, in which respect this town differed from some other towns in the Commonwealth. If a different state of things came to exist subsequently, as may be inferred from my brother Labaree's admirable introduction of me for the service I am now performing, it is certainly a matter for great rejoicing that the intercourse of the churches is now exceedingly harmonious, and that the present pastors have for nearly nine years known "how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," even "as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

Evidently, as churches and ministers better know each other, they will think more highly of each other. Prejudice and hostility will disappear in proportion as a good mutual understanding prevails. It will be as in the case mentioned by the eminent Mr. Jay, of Bath, England, who said that a countryman told him how he was that morning excessively alarmed as he was going in a lonely way, and thought he saw a hideous monster, the sight of which filled him with consternation; but, upon nearer approach, the object that had caused his almost overwhelming terror was found to be his brother John, who had not been duly recognized because of the thick fog of the early morning. Too often Christian brethren are thus mistaken, and happy are they who make a timely discovery of brethren, in the place of supposed monsters. God grant that we may all know and love as brethren.

You, my friends of this Church and congregation, have my best wishes in your behalf, that all the best of the past may be more than equaled in the future of your more abundant prosperity, so that those who celebrate your two hundredth or your two hundred and fiftieth anniversary may be able to recount even better things than have been heard today, as your progress shall be traced in all that is praiseworthy, ren-



dering any coming celebration more joyful than this in which we are made glad.

Rev. Dr. TARBOX, of Boston, was invited to speak, as a recognized historian of New England churches, and as having a peculiar interest in such occasions as this.

**Address of Rev. Dr. Tarbox.**

During the exercises of the afternoon and evening it has been made plain that one of the most important pastorates in the history of this Church was that of Rev. Jonathan Strong, D.D., who was settled here from 1789 to 1814. Now, this Jonathan Strong was born and passed his childhood in the rough old town of Bolton, Conn. The minister there was an odd but notable man, by the name of George Colton, who occupied the pulpit of the town more than fifty years. At this time there was another Dr. Strong (Dr. Nathan Strong, of Hartford), one of the foremost men of his generation, known for his wit as well as for his great abilities. He it was, on the occasion of some ecclesiastical gathering, when he had charge of the assembly, who perpetrated the well-known but questionable joke of calling out, "Brother Colton, of Bolton, will you step this way and pray?"

As we have already said, Bolton was a rough old hill town, and it is from such towns that a large proportion of our eminent men, in all departments of public activity, have come. The nature of its soil and surroundings may be inferred from what the following lines seem to suggest:

And did you ever climb on foot  
To where old Bolton stands?  
And did you ever look about  
And wish you owned those lands?  
But Bolton was a famous town,  
Back in the olden time,  
And had a famous minister  
With her own name to rhyme.  
She sought for the proprieties,  
The fitnesses of things;  
She taught young poets to aspire,  
And use their budding wings;

And so for half a century  
Bolton sat still and heard,  
While Parson Colton, tall and quaint,  
Proclaimed to them the word.

There was a time, one hundred years and more ago, when the glory of New England was in her hill towns; and so important a place was this old town, even more than one hundred and fifty years ago, that no less a man than Jonathan Edwards was called to its ministry and accepted the invitation. The arrangements were all completed, the writings drawn up, and he was soon to be ordained, when there came an urgent call for his services at the college in New Haven. Here he was detained until the people of Bolton, tired of waiting, called another man to the pulpit. One is curious to know what would have happened in New England, if the illustrious Jonathan Edwards had settled in Bolton, rather than in Northampton.

But to return to Dr. Strong. When he was a lad of eight years old, his family moved up into New Hampshire. This was in 1772. Three years before, Dr. Eleazer Wheelock had gone up from the town of Lebanon, Conn., with Moor's Indian Charity School, and had thus laid the foundations of Dartmouth College, at Hanover, N. H. There was a deep sympathy with Dr. Wheelock in this movement among many of the towns of eastern Connecticut. He was a great friend of Whitfield, and had suffered not a little on that account. The older colleges, Harvard and Yale, were set in strong opposition to Whitfield, especially during his earlier visits to this country. Dr. Wheelock was known as an earnestly evangelical man and the friend of revivals, and from the Connecticut towns of Lebanon, Hebron, Bolton, Coventry, Mansfield, Windham, Canterbury, and others, young men flocked up to the infant college in the woods of New Hampshire. The way was long and difficult. For a large part of this journey there was nothing beyond a bridle-path; and yet such was the zeal of the Connecticut youth in this enterprise, that of the two

hundred and eighty-five young men graduated at Dartmouth in the first twenty years of its existence—from 1770 to 1790—one hundred and twenty-two of them, among whom was your Jonathan Strong, were born in the far-away State of Connecticut, which already had a college almost a hundred years old. If you will meditate upon this fact a little, you will discover that it is quite a remarkable one. Young Strong, of course, was then living in New Hampshire, but the great majority of the Connecticut boys had to make the long journey back and forth through their whole college course.

I came to attend this celebration as a stranger and looker-on, expecting to take no part in the public exercises; but as the hours have been passing away, I have gradually come to the conclusion that I belong here. Fortunately or unfortunately, I have a name which is thought to be a little singular. There is this good thing about it, however, that all letters and packages so directed go straight to their mark, while the unhappy John Smith is all the while looking up his lost goods and epistles. But, sitting here, I begin to feel very much at home. My middle name is Niles, and on this soil the Nileses have greatly abounded, and in the records today brought forward has appeared a veritable Increase Niles. Now, the way in which I came to bear that baptismal name was this. In the year 1750 Increase Porter, of Hebron, Conn., was united in marriage to Mary Niles, of the neighboring town of Colchester, parish of Westchester. These were my great maternal grandfather and grandmother, and my mother wished to mingle their names together in giving me mine. So far as I can learn, the name Niles was carried into eastern Connecticut from this very locality; and so, as I suppose, I am here among my distant kindred, and have not only a general but an ancestral and historical interest in this deeply interesting occasion.

The presence of REV. DR. J. P. GULLIVER, of Andover Theological Seminary (formerly a teacher in Randolph Academy), was expected with much interest by his old pupils and friends. At the last moment, however, he was detained. The following address had been prepared in outline, and has since been fully written, at the request of the committee.

Address of Professor J. P. Gulliver, D.D.

Among the many interesting features of memorial occasions like this, there is one, a subordinate one perhaps, but yet one which is well worthy of note. It is the reverence for the past which gives inspiration alike to speech and song and prayer. It has been supposed that we Americans are quite destitute of this amiable and conservative sentiment. I have sometimes heard Englishmen say: "What a pity it is that you have no old cathedrals, or ruins, or monuments to connect you with the past. It is strange that you can keep up the tone of society where everything is so new!" But Americans make up in imagination what they lack in age. It is as true in this, as in everything else, that "where there is a will there is a way." The American has an inventive mind, and if he is disposed to reverence the past, he will not be long at a loss to find antiquities. You will meet at the West an "Old Settlers' Society," holding its annual anniversary in towns where the paint is hardly dry on the most ancient structures. The parks of level Chicago are adorned with hills and mossy rocks, and dens of wild beasts, like the fastnesses of some forest primeval. But in New England we fortunately are not so dependent on the vividness of fancy, since our memories, if not so full of years as those which carry the European back to the barbaric days of his ancestors, are far more full of genuine respect and pride and reverence. The sentiment of New England toward the Pilgrims is one of the loftiest and purest possible to man. The ancients called such reverence for ancestors, *piety*. In this case the sentiment well deserves the name; for the honor we give our fathers is inextricably mingled with the honor we render to the God of our fathers.

It is easy to measure a New Englander's piety toward God, by the estimate he has of his Puritan ancestors. If prayer and praise and the exaltations of public worship, when the souls of a great congregation together hold communion with the skies, are unknown in his experience, he will be sure to string out his jests upon the "arctic meeting-houses," and "the two-hour sermons," and the "nasal prayers" of his Puritan ancestors. If he has slight regard for God's law, you may count on finding him entirely familiar with the "Blue Laws of Connecticut," the creation of that disgruntled Episcopal priest, *Peters*, the Baron Munchausen of the Colonial times. In short, he will glorify his ancestry, and vilify his ancestors! So this reverence for parents, which is the whole of religion to the Chinese, lies closely beside religion, as its natural expression and fruitage, with the New Englander.

You have today looked back over a glorious record—glorious not with the noise of the captains and the shouting, not with arms and banners and blood, as the records of chivalry and heroism are—but bright with self-sacrifice, devotion and the love which asks no reward—a record emblazoned with the deeds of those who "having been wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and having turned many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

The memories aroused today should, and will, make you better men and women. They will give exaltation to your lives. The grandeur of the Puritan ancestor shall appear in the children and the children's children. The past shall evolve the present, and the future shall be born of both. And when the two hundredth or the three hundredth anniversary of your church shall be celebrated, *you* will be ancestors also, and your character and deeds will pass into the grateful and admiring memory of the children of today, and of the generations yet unborn.

Pardon me for this moralizing. The thought attracted me and I have spoken it because it seemed worthy of at least a

moment's attention at this time. And now I cannot help asking myself why I am here among these men and women of Randolph? I was much surprised at the invitation, for I could hardly believe at first that anybody living knew that I had ever set foot in your town, or if they knew it, would think the circumstance worthy of notice.

However, for the information of the present generation, I can testify that there was once an academy here built for the admirable purpose of starting the young men and women of that period toward the higher education, which alone could make them leaders in society. In that design I believe it was eminently successful. As I recollect it, it was a building in the Grecian style, quite a Parthenon in fact, with classical pillars arranged along its front. This was in the year 1840, forty-one years ago. Strange to say, my predecessor in the office of Principal of that academy is still living, the Rev. Dr. Poor, and the last time I saw him, we were both members of the Presbyterian General Assembly, in St. Louis, and he was then as mettlesome and frisky as any boy he had to train in the Randolph Academy. "The Academy" was in our day a very important institution. I would not dare to tell you how many pupils there were. But I know a great swarm at recess poured out on all sides of the building, and a great noise they made. I was a stripling, just turned of twenty-one, and I am sure if all the learning I had was divided equally among all those pupils, they must have become scholars on the homœopathic principle of infinitesimal doses of very high potency.

There is, however, one very satisfactory way of testing our literary success. The graduates who came forth through those academic pillars into the broad world have, as I am told, done great honor to that, or some other, part of their training. Perhaps it is enough to rest assured that nothing they experienced there prevented them from achieving greatness. . . .

But I forget myself. This is a church anniversary. I am almost coming to think that my little Parthenon was the



center of interest, rather than the meeting-house on the hill. Indeed, to tell the truth, they were closely identified. The trustees were the officers of the Church, and the children were largely in the congregation. You must indulge me if I take a moment to speak of one man who was the leading character in them both — that grand old man who, for nearly an entire century, from his birth to his death, had his home in this town; who was the beloved physician in your households; who was a pillar in the church; who was the leader in the Sunday school; the promotor of public education; the citizen ready for every good work; and an honored curator in the governing boards of some of the most important institutions of learning in the State. Descended in a direct line, through both his parents, from Pilgrims of the Mayflower, whose words and deeds have adorned both history and song, *Dr. Ebenezer Alden* is a household name among you. I was an inmate of his family for two years. I came to revere and love him as I have few men since. In all my subsequent experiences of treacherous human nature, of which I have had my share, I could always turn to the memory of the strong, quaint, clear-headed, but kindly and loving doctor, who had been my early friend, and say, *There is a solid nugget of pure gold!* The memory of such a man is a mine of riches to you and to your children.

But I must not impose upon you a long story of the past. If I did I am afraid you would think that I am a boy no longer! I should be sorry to give you an excuse for such a mistake as that would be! Are not the boys and girls (some of them) here whom I used to teach? They, I am sure, will protect me against such an imputation. We are nearer of an age, my dear pupils, than we were when you were twelve and I twenty-one! The shadows are lengthening behind us! The sun of life is dropping slowly down. But the beams, if longer, are gentler and softer. They are growing more beautiful, too, are they not? The lessons of the school are forgotten, no doubt, but the experiences of life seem to gather

themselves together, at the closing, and to weave themselves into curtains of manifold beauty, about the entrance-gate of our immortal life. Great examples are about us. Blessed memories fill the air with music. Loving ministries are making our path soft with verdure. The anchor of our souls, sure and steadfast, has caught the ground within the vail! May we be followers of those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises!

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The services of the occasion closed with the Doxology and Benediction.

## Letters.

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BOSTON, Nov. 12, 1881.

REV. J. C. LABAREE: *My Dear Brother*,\*—I take pleasure in complying with your request that I should add to your memorial volume a brief testimony to the estimate in which the First Church of Randolph is held by some of those who received their early training under its religious nurture. I have time only to note a few points upon which I should be tempted to enlarge, did not other duties forbid.

1. *The meeting-house of our childhood was a pleasant and attractive place.* It was the new meeting-house dedicated in 1825, about four years old when I first recall it, although I have been told upon the best authority, that I was carried to it at an earlier day, and was the first child baptized within its walls. The Randolph people of those days were a generation ahead of their times, and put their choir and church music upon the pulpit side of the house—a custom which is now almost universal, but was then the distinction of but two or three churches of that vicinity. Possibly it was not an unmixed blessing. At any rate the boys of the congregation enjoyed it, and became well acquainted at an early age with “the singers and the players on instruments.” We have none of us forgotten the two bass-voils, big and little, the two or three violins, the two flutes, the clarinet, the ophicleide, the bass horn, the trombone, and best of all “the old serpent.” I think on a few occasions we praised the Lord also “with cymbals.” The voluntaries of that band of music, executed at the close of each stanza, with sharp “staccato” precision, and an overwhelming volume of sound, who can ever forget?

Our beloved pastor, Mr. Hitchcock, trained his people to punctuality in a marked degree. When he entered the house, with his black sermon-case under his arm, waited upon his family into the minister’s pew, and then turned and ascended the pulpit stairs, it was expected that every person in the congregation would be in his place; and rarely was there a tardy step. Indeed, as all who entered the house were obliged to face the congregation, it required considerable courage to go through the ordeal of being a late comer.

\* Rev. Dr. Alden’s absence on the Anniversary occasion through serious illness was deeply regretted by those present.

I have not forgotten that there was a traditional "dark hole" under the pulpit, where boys whose conduct failed to be exemplary in the house of God, were in danger of finding themselves suddenly immured; nor do I fail to recall the face of the tithing-man who sat in the front seat of the gallery, on the right of the minister, who was supposed to have the authority to execute that stern decree; but as no culprit was ever known to have suffered the penalty, I can honestly say that the meeting-house had no terrors for the children, and we soon learned to love both the place and the service.

2. *I can testify to the efforts which were made particularly to interest the young in religious truth.* The study of the Word was made interesting, both in the Sabbath school and in the instructions from the pulpit. Dr. Hitchcock's weekly expositions of the Sabbath school lesson, upon Sunday evenings, have rarely been equalled for perspicuity and for pith. The young were encouraged to become disciples of Christ in childhood, and were heartily welcomed to the church, if so led by the Divine Spirit, at an early age. I shall never forget the Sabbath when two boys, one of the age of thirteen, and the other of eleven, walked down the aisle of that church before the congregation, and were so kindly received to the watch and care of the Lord's people. Nor were they and others of their age afterwards neglected, but were brought immediately into the activities of the Christian service. There was no reason why any child or youth, if so disposed, should not present himself and be sure of a warm welcome from the pastor and officers and older members of the First Church of Randolph.

3. *We were favored with clear doctrinal instruction from the pulpit.* The atmosphere of the town, and of the surrounding towns, was theological. Dr. Emmons, although he had retired from the pulpit, still lived at an advanced age in Franklin — he did not die until 1840 — and his sermons were in many a house not only on the shelf, but well read. The influence of Dr. Strong had come down to a later generation, and had given a taste for doctrinal inquiry to many of the most intelligent of his flock. The New England divines were known by their writings in many a household, and were discussed sometimes with considerable warmth. Asa Burton had his followers as well as Hopkins and Emmons. Some of us remember pretty stout arguments on both sides between the "tasters" and the "exercisers."

The people of Randolph and the surrounding towns at that time required doctrinal discussion as one part of their pulpit instruction, and they received it greatly to their profit. Dr. Hitchcock was a good representative of the New England theology which has come down in the line of the best theological thinkers of other days, retaining the fundamental essentials of the truth, but giving free opportunity for different methods of interpretation. His "*Hand-Book*" of theology, with its literal "five points," his five fingers, we can none of us ever forget. It settled all our troubles about "election" in the twinkling of an eye. 1. (The little finger extended) All men are depraved. 2. (The next finger) Christ died for all. 3. (Third finger) The offer of salvation is freely made to all. 4. (Fourth finger) All with one consent began to make excuse. 5. (The thumb) GOD CHOSE SOME. That thumb was an ultimate appeal. Arminian theology

never peeped or muttered after that. I am free to say that I do not think that those clear doctrinal sermons ever did us any harm.

In this connection, mention should be made of the pulpits of the neighboring churches; for they all had an important influence upon the training of the Randolph people. Had I time I should delight to give a picture of the different men who preached by way of exchange with our minister, and whose names immediately suggest that they are well worthy of mention: Dr. Storrs, of Braintree, whose prayers are recalled more vividly than even his impressive and sometimes vehement oratory: Dr. Codman, of Dorchester, who drove up through the street with his high-stepping horse, which he usually called "Old School," to distinguish him from a frisky young colt, which bore the name of "New School," and which he never drove on exchange; the very face of that good man was a benediction, especially when he discoursed, as some of us well remember, upon the twenty-third Psalm: Rev. Daniel Huntington, of North Bridgewater, whose reading of a hymn was worth travelling some distance to hear: Rev. David Brigham, of East Randolph, one of whose clear-cut expositions of a difficult passage in Hebrews has followed me for over forty years. Time would fail me to tell of Dr. Calvin Park, of Stoughton, father of the distinguished professor, who omitted the "long prayer" on one of his exchanges, much to the gratification of the more juvenile part of the audience; of Mr. Perkins, of Weymouth, who rose on tip-toe during his preaching, and so added both to his stature and his emphasis; of Mr. Ward of Abington, who went through the services by lightning-express, bringing them all within the hour, but saying more during his rapid enunciation in half an hour than some men do in half a day; of Mr. Couch, the successor of Mr. Huntington, who rolled Hopkinsian theology as a "sweet morsel under his tongue;" of Mr. Sanford, of Dorchester Village, who always preached by turning sharply toward each corner of the house at regular intervals, but who never forgot to put in some illustration particularly meant for the children—but how I am running on! Excuse me, and I will come to an abrupt conclusion by adding that if I had time, I should like to emphasize

4. *The broad outlook which the instructions of the First Church of Randolph gave us all of the great advancing kingdom of Christ throughout the world.* We children were trained up to observe the Monthly Concert of prayer for missions as regularly as we were to go to the Preparatory Lecture and to the Sunday school, and to give our personal contribution to every benevolent cause as faithfully as our fathers and mothers; all of which was educational to no inconsiderable degree.

I congratulate you, my dear brother, as the pastor of a church which has a most instructive history behind it, and I congratulate the church upon a pastor who is so worthy a representative of the best days of the sound and faithful Randolph pulpit.

Goodly is the heritage, sacred and precious the trust, which our fathers, revered and honored, have left in our hands! May we retain it in its integrity, and pass it on, greatly enhanced in value, to those who shall follow!

Most cordially yours,

E. K. ALDEN.

MEDWAY, May 27, 1881.

HON. J. WHITE BELCHER AND OTHERS: *Gentlemen*,— Your cordial invitation to attend the "One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Congregational Church of Randolph," is cordially received. It would give me much pleasure (and I may enjoy it) to attend and meet, as I may, some whom I well knew among you half a century since. The occasion would doubtless recall pleasant memories of others who have passed away. The manly forms and genial faces of your old pastor, Rev. Dr. Hitchcock, and your old physician, Dr. Ebenezer Alden, even now confront me and cheer me as I think of their life and labor among you and in other fields. But my chief interest, as you may suppose, clusters around the dear boys of your *first* private high school taught by me in 1832, in the old Masonic Hall owned by one Shankland, the tailor. Many of these have since drawn a higher inspiration from succeeding teachers, some, many I trust, from the church of their fathers, while others have passed all gradations to a heavenly state. I call to mind the Mann boys, Benjamin, Asa, Jonathan and Stillman, and Seth; the Tolmans; the Thayers, Elisha W., Mor-ton, James and George W.; the Turners, Seth and Royal; Jonathan White, a white-haired boy from the East; Ebenezer Alden, Jr., John King, Fred How-ard, H. B. Alden, James French, J. White Belcher, Josiah L. Arms, the Beals, E. and Royal T., and Robert Hitchcock, with perfect lessons always, and Joseph G., a little boy then—and others whom I cannot now recall. How many of them have been gathered into the fold of the Good Shepherd, through the church which *you* represent, I know not. Fifty years ago they saw its light, which, like a city set on a hill, could not be hid.

May its light continue to shine, to guide multitudes over the sea of life to the haven of eternal rest.

Yours very truly,

M. M. FISHER.

BRIDGEWATER, June 7, 1881.

*To the Congregational Church, Randolph, and the Parish connected therewith, through their Committees.*

REV. J. C. LABAREE, J. WHITE BELCHER AND OTHERS: *Gentlemen*,— Accept our grateful acknowledgments of your kind invitation to be present with you tomorrow on occasion of the "*One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary*" of your Church. Be assured it would afford us great pleasure to comply with your request did not the infirmities of age forbid. It is our earnest wish and prayer to the great Head of the Church, that He may be with you; that all present may be filled "with faith and the Holy Spirit;" that thus your gathering together may be full of profit and of enjoyment; and not only so, but that the coming *one hundred and fifty* years may witness to your growth in "whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely," and that the "God of peace may be with you" evermore.

Yours truly, in pleasant remembrances and hopeful anticipations, for myself and Mrs. Brigham,

DAVID BRIGHAM.



DORCHESTER, June 4, 1881.

REV. J. C. LABAREE: *My Dear Brother*, — I thank you very sincerely for your invitation, and much regret that I cannot be present at the approaching anniversary. The Second Church of Dorchester is just half as old as yours, having reached its seventy-fifth birthday in January last. We call ourselves venerable, but must do homage to you as doubly so. The two churches have been often pleasantly associated. Dr. Hitchcock was the Moderator of the Council at my ordination. Mr. Cordley was my classmate, and I gave him the right hand of fellowship when he was installed. The present pastor of the Randolph Church wears gracefully the name of the first pastor of the Dorchester Church, which may account for some of his virtues, and suggests the pleasant hope of a pastorate extended through forty years. The cordial fellowship enjoyed for so many years in the Norfolk Conference cannot be forgotten. May the review of the past prepare for new activity and success during a future bright and prolonged.

Cordially yours,

J. H. MEANS.

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ANDOVER, 1881.

MY DEAR MR. LABAREE: — I regret very much that my circumstances have prevented me from answering your very kind letter before this time. I should have been very happy to attend the interesting anniversary to which you have politely invited me. My engagements, however, confine me to Andover, and prevent my acceptance of your generous invitation. With the highest regard I remain,

Your friend and servant,

EDWARDS A. PARK.

## Appendix.

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### *Copy of the Vote of the South Precinct of Braintree authorizing a New Precinct.*

SOUTH BRANTRY december the nineteth 1727.

at a meeteing of our South precinct Lawfully assembled Then voted Mr. Samuel Pain moderator for said day and it Was Requested by a number of our remote Brethren that they might be a precinct by themselves and it was propounded by the moderator Where the Line shuld run, and the bounds are as follows To begin at the head of the grat pond and norward to milton Line and so from The grat pond strat to Collonol quinceys Line and from thenc to the reuer of Cachato and up the reuer to the mouth of tumbling brook and so upon the line between The Reverand Mr Niles and Samuel Bass and so upon the Line between Mr Niles and Thomas holbrook and so strate to Waymouth Line. That is to say paralal with the said Line of Mr Niles and Thomas holbrook

and it was propounded by the moderator whether they woould consent that the aboue said bounds shuld be the Line and it was put to uot and it past in the affirmatiue That it shuld.

December the 25 1727

A true coppì of the uot

attested By ELKANAH

WALES

Pret clerk

### *Endorsement on the back of the Petition for the new Precinct.*

In the Houfe of Representatives January 3<sup>d</sup> 1727 Read & Ordered.

A Petition of John Niles Samuel Payne & others Inhabitants of the South Precinct in Brantrey in behalf of themselves & their neighbours Praying to be fet off a separate & diflinct Precinct agreeable to a Vote pas'd at a Precinct Meeting legully warned & held the 19<sup>th</sup> of Decmr last exhibited with the said Petition.

In the Houfe of Representatves Read & Ordered that the Prayer of the Petition be granted, And that the Petitioners with their Families & Estates lying & being within the Lines particularly fet forth & described in & by a Vote of the South Precinct in Brantrey regularly held there the nineteenth Day of December



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# Fold-out Placeholder

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last past, to the Petition annexed, are hereby constituted a separate & distinct Precinct, & invested & endowed with equal Powers, Privileges & Immunities with any other Precinct in the Province; And that Mr John Niles Junr a principal Inhabitant in the said Precinct be impowered & directed to notify & summon the Inhabitants duly qualified for Voters to assemble & convene for the choice of Precinct officers to stand until the next annual Election according to Law.

Sent up for concurrence

WM. DUDLEY Spr

In council

Jan 5 1727, Read & Concurd

J. WILLARD Secry

Consented to

W. DUMMER.

*THE COVENANT Adopted at the Organization of the Church,  
June 8th, 1731.*

We whose names are hereunto subscribed, apprehending ourselves called of God into the church state of the gospel, do first of all confess ourselves unworthy to be so highly favored of the Lord; and admire that free and rich grace of His, which triumphs over so great unworthiness: — and thus with our humble reliance on the aids of grace therein promised for them that in a sense of their inability to do any good thing, do humbly wait on him for all, — we now thankfully lay hold on his Covenant and would choose the things that please Him.

We declare our serious belief of the christian religion, as contained in the sacred scriptures, and with a view thereof as the confession of Faith in our churches has exhibited; heartily resolving to conform our lives unto the rules of that holy religion, as long as we live in the world.

We give up ourselves unto the Lord Jehovah, who is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and avouch him this day to be our God, Father, Saviour, and Lord, and receive him as our portion forever.

We give up ourselves unto the blessed Jesus, who is the Lord Jehovah, and adhere to him as the head of his people in the covenant of grace; and rely on him as our Prophet, Priest and King, to bring us into eternal blessedness.

We acknowledge our everlasting and indispensable obligations in all the duties of a godly, sober, and virtuous life; and very particularly in the duties of a church state; and a body of people associated for an obedience to him in all the ordinances of the gospel; and we therefore depend upon his gracious assistance, for our faithful discharge of the duties that are incumbent on us.

We desire and intend, and with dependence on his promised grace, we engage to walk together as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ in the faith and order of the gospel; so far as we shall have the same revealed unto us; conscientiously attending the public worship of God, the sacraments of his New Testament, the discipline of his Kingdom, and all his holy institutions in communion with one another; — withal promising to walk orderly in the way of fellowship and communion with all the churches of Christ according to those rules of holy order which he hath appointed.

At the same time we present our offspring with us unto the Lord, purposing with his help to do our part in the methods of a religious education, that they may be the Lord's.

And all this we do, flying to the blood of the everlasting covenant for the pardon of all our sins, and praying that the glorious Lord who is the great shepherd would prepare and strengthen us to every good work to do his will, working in us that which will be pleasing in his sight.

To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Original members: Elisha Eaton, pastor; John Niles, Moses Curtis, John Niles, William Copeland, Thomas Wales, David Eames, Samuel Bass, Joseph White, David Slone.

We have not the original of this document. A finely written copy exists, dated "June 12th, 1774," and thus endorsed: "The church renewed their covenant and consented that the committee of said church should sign it in their behalf.

"Moses Taft, pastor. Thomas Wales, Joshua Howard, Joseph White, Peter Thayer, Benjamin Porter, Jonathan Wild.

"Two of the first signers when the church was first gathered were of the committee when it was renewed, viz.: Thomas Wales and Joseph White. The rest lie dormant in the tomb."

CONFESSION OF FAITH AND COVENANT, "*in use during Dr. Strong's ministry, and till the year 1826,*" *when a form slightly differing from this was adopted, and is still retained.*

#### CONFESSION OF FAITH.

You believe that there is but one only living, self-existent, independent and eternal God, Maker of all things in heaven and earth. You believe that God exists in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that they essentially possess the same infinite perfections. You believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by Divine inspiration, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. That God made man at first upright, endued with his image of knowledge and holiness:—that man has sinned against God, and entirely lost his moral image:—that in consequence of the first apostacy all mankind are born into the world destitute of holiness, and are totally opposed to God, and justly deserving of endless punishment.—That the Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity has made an atonement for the sins of men, and that whosoever will repent and believe in him may be saved:—That God has a church in the world and an elect number to call in;—That all the elect will be justified by free grace through Jesus Christ and that all whom God justifies he will glorify forever; and that the finally impenitent will be subjected to endless punishment.

*These things you profess to believe.*

#### COVENANT.

In the presence of God, angels and men, you do now sincerely and solemnly, according to the terms of the everlasting covenant, take the true God, the Lord



Jehovah to be your God, renouncing all other Gods. You take the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Prophet, Priest and King. You solemnly promise, divine grace assisting, to walk sincerely and uprightly before God, all your days in obedience to his holy commands, as they are or shall be made known to you from time to time. You give up yourself to this church in the Lord, promising and covenanting to cleave to us and walk together with us, as a member of the same mystical body, and as an instituted church of Christ, obedience while you continue a member of it, in holy love, subjection and truthfulness, determining to assemble with us for the worship of God, ministering to our needs according to your ability. You submit yourself to the discipline of Christ in this church. You promise to walk orderly in the way of fellowship with all the churches of Christ among us, agreeably to those rules of holy order which he has appointed: that the Lord may be one and his name one, in all the churches, throughout all generations to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus. *Thus you promise.*

I therefore pronounce you a member of the church of Christ in this place, entitled to all the privileges of the same; and may you adorn the profession you have now made by a blameless life and conversation.

REV. MR. TAFT'S CONFESSION OF FAITH, *read at his ordination,  
August 26, 1752, and printed by request of Council.*

I believe, the existence of one Supreme Being who is possessed of all possible perfection and glory; who is the Creator, Upholder, and Governour of all things.

I believe, that in the Godhead there are three Persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are the same in Substance, have in them all the perfections of the divine nature, and are equal in Power and Glory.

I believe, God has from all Eternity foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; and yet not so as in any degree to become the Author of sin, or to destroy the moral agency in his rational creatures, and lay any constraint on the will of his creatures to sin, in order to bring about the divine decrees: but though the decrees of God render events necessary, yet they do not take away the liberty of moral agents, so that they should not act freely in what they do, in bringing about the decrees of God.

I believe, God did at the first make man holy and upright after his own image and moral likeness; furnished him with the skill and ability requisite to yield that obedience which was due from him, and gave him power to have continued in the estate wherein he was created; but man being left to the freedom of his own will was overcome by the Temptation of the Serpent to eat of the forbidden fruit; and so fell from the rectitude he was created in, by sinning against God; and Adam being appointed of God to be the federal head and representative of mankind, he by his disobedience plunged himself and his posterity into a state of sin and misery.

I believe, that God has from everlasting elected to salvation a certain number of the race of mankind; not for anything he saw in them, more than in those that were not chosen by him.

I believe, that Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God is the one only Mediator between God and men, and that it is by the merits of Christ, and his imputed righteousness, and through faith only that salvation is obtained by any of the fallen race of mankind.

I believe in the doctrines of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as necessary means, appointed of God for man's acceptance in his sight; and also the necessity of regeneration, or the new birth; and that those who are born again by the Spirit of God, are now justified, and should be progressively sanctified, and be made through grace to persevere unto eternal life.

I believe, the absolute necessity of the special assistance of the Holy Spirit of God to begin and carry on the good work of grace in men's hearts, without which no man is capable to perform any religious duty acceptably to God.

I believe, that the light of nature is not sufficient to lead and direct men in their present lapsed estate in the way to true and final holiness; as the mind and conscience is naturally defiled.

I believe, God has out of his infinite mercy given a complete revelation of his mind and will in his holy Word (the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testament) as to all things necessary to be known for the salvation of sinners; which I receive as coming from God, and resolve by the grace of God assisting me to make the rule of my faith and practice.

I believe, the Immortality of the soul; that the soul exists after the separation is made by death between the soul and body; and that at death the soul doth pass immediately into a perfect state of happiness or misery.

Finally, I believe the Resurrection of the body, to a final Judgment, when the future and eternal state of all men shall be determined by Christ the glorious Judge at his second coming, in the end of the world; when every one shall be judged in righteousness, and shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil."

"N. B. The Rev. Mr. Taft's Confession of Faith, was, by order of the council, read in council, and also publicly, previous to the charge; for a testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus; and to his belief of, and adherence to those essential Doctrines of the Gospel, and articles of the Christian faith professed in these New England churches:—worthy of imitation in these perilous times in like cases, as one proper expedient to prevent the further spread of errors in the land, and defection in the churches."

Rev. Mr. Taft's Confession of Faith is here given, not only for its own intrinsic worth, but also as it is the only production of his pen now known to us. We have manuscript sermons of Rev. Mr. Eaton, the first pastor, and printed sermons of Dr. Strong, the third, but this only from the second pastor, who held the office for forty years save one.

*The Relation of the Ancient Precinct to the Public Schools.*

The Massachusetts Act of 1647 required every town containing "fifty householders," to provide a school free to all children. One school was surely quite inadequate to the wants of a town like Braintree in 1730, with three precincts, and stretching from Boston harbor to the Old Colony line. The management of the schools was in the hands of the town-meeting, and was entrusted to a School Committee, but not having independent powers as at the present time. The town (but not a precinct) could lay a tax for one school or more; or, the additional schools might be supported by individual subscriptions.

This South Precinct was left to the undisturbed management of its schools. It determined when and where they should be held; decided the location of school-houses; received from the town its share of the school-money, and expended it as the precinct thought best. A School Committee was appointed annually for nearly sixty years, and this committee was always held to strict account by the precinct meeting.

Dr. Alden, in his papers on the early history of the town, has given a sketch of the rise and progress of schools. He states that "The first school-house in town was built about the same time as the first meeting-house [1727], perhaps at a little earlier period. It was small and inconvenient. It stood near the meeting-house, not far from the line of North Street, which then ran east of the present location, to avoid a steep ascent which was afterward removed. The house was never finished, and a proposition was made at an early day to dispose of it and build a larger one."

We are not informed when the first school was opened. The following votes, taken directly from the parish records, give the only light we have upon this point.

"October the 14th 1729, Put to vote by the Modderator Wheather we Would Do any[thing] toward finishing the School Hous & It Past In the Negative."

"April the 20th 1730, Voted that there shall be three men chose as A comety to partition to the town at their next meeting that we might Either haue our proportionable part of the School or be releised of the charge which we pay to it." This petition was granted by vote of the town of Braintree, Nov. 2, 1730, and £8 allowed.

"December the 14th 1730, propounded by the Moderator whether we would haue A School Kept this winter Season amongst us as far as the Eight pounds will go and it past in the negetiue."

"January the 15 1731, asked By the moderator whether we would haue A school kept the Remaining part of this winter Season and it past in the negetiue."

A portion of the records for the next three years has been torn out and lost: on the leaves which remain no allusion is made to a school till we come to the following:

"March 14th 1734, voted to keep a scoll. voted to chouse a comitty to reseue (receive) the mony of the town and to lay it out in keeping of a scoll in

said Precinct, voted Samuel Pain Samuel Hayden Cooper John Niles this com-mity."

"December 2d 1735, we voted to keep a school this winter. we voted to chuse a com-mity. we voted Dea. Thomas Wales Samuel Pain Samuel Bass a com-mity to order the school this com-mity to haue power to demand and reseue (receive) the money out of the town Treasurer and to agree with a school master."

With almost unbroken regularity a similar vote appears year by year until the town was incorporated in 1793. Dr. Alden remarks that for the purpose of lengthening the term of the school, money was not unfrequently raised by subscription in addition to the amount received from the town.

"March 21 1737, Chose Jonathan Clark Samuel Venton Peter Thayer a Comety to call the former comety to an a Count Conarning the Schoole money and to Give in thair report to the next meeting. Voted that the Comety Last Chosen are impoured to buld a School House on the Precincts Land near the Meeting-House provided thaye can gather a nouf by waye of subberscrepshion to Defraye the charge thair of (sd House to be 20 feet Long & 16 feet wide) and to give an a count to the next meeting how far thaye have proceded in the bulding of sd House."

"September 25 1738 voted to Recue (receive) the School House to be a precinct School House upon the Terme the com-mity offered Which was as folleth.

"We the subscribers being freely wiling to encorig The bulding a Schoolhouse neer the meting house on the precincts Land for the Use and Benifit of the precinct provided it be cept in Repair At that place Aboue said At the charge of said precinct and improved for a School house. We do giue as followeth—

"Dea. Thomas Wales, £6. Lieut. Joshua Hayward £4. s1. Dea. Samuel Bass, £3. s7. Ensign Joseph Wales, £3. Joseph White, £1. s7. d6. Napthali Thayer, s14. Benjamin Porter s14. John Clark, s16. Alexander French, £2. Thomas French, £2. William Linfield, £2. Ebenezer Niles £1. s6. Cooper John Niles, £1. s6. William Copeland, s7. Joseph Hayward, s6. Joseph Thayer, s7. Nathan Niles, s12. Jonathan Hayden s8. Daniel Niles s7. Samuel Vesey s10. John Nightingale s14. John Vesey s7. Joseph Spear, s14. Benjamin Spear, s7. Benjamin Pain, s12. Christopher Hayden, s5. John Smith, s3 d6. Of the committee, Jonathan Clark, £3. Samuel Vinton £3. Peter Thayer £4. s10. Total £45. s1."

"Octbr The 13<sup>th</sup> 1740. We chofe Thomas French Ebenezer Copeland & Peter Thayer to Be a Committee to Provide a School Marfler. It was Voted that the above Said Committee Should have Power to provide a Table and Benchis In the School houfe Which Shall Be Necafery for the use of the School."

"March the 14<sup>th</sup> Day 1744 Voted that the People on Cochato Side of the River that live within the bounds of Said Precinct Should haue five pounds old Tennor of the School Money To the use of a Scool To be Cept on that Side of the River upon Conditions that they provide a Houfe for the School to be Cept in. Voted that the people that Live on the Northwest Side of Surcuits ordinary [i. e. in the northwest part of the precinct] Should have five pounds old Tennor of the School Money Laid out in the ufe of a School Being Cept There

amongst them upon Conditions that they Provide a Houfe for the School to be Cept in."

The people on the Cochato side seem to have accepted the condition, and annual appropriations for their school follow quite regularly. No further allusion is made to a school northwest of "Surcuits ordinary," but the following vote implies that other schools were in due time established.

"March ye 7th 1765, Voted that the People on Cochato Side of the River & other extreem parts of the Precinct have the benefit of Such a part of the School Money as usual."

This vote is twenty-one years later than the preceding. During this period it is evident that new schools were opened, but their location, their number, and in what order they were established, does not appear.

"The custom seems to have been to use the money thus voted to the remote parts of the precinct to provide instruction for the younger children in the warm season of the year. These schools were usually taught by females and kept in private houses until regular districts were formed and school-houses erected in them. . . . In East Randolph [Holbrook] the first school-house was erected probably about the year 1750. It stood on the corner south of the meeting-house." *Dr. E. Alden.*

The town of Braintree voted in 1763, "That there be a school-house built in each precinct of said town at the town's expense." The exact location of the houses in the North and Middle Precincts was designated, and then it was voted, "that the South Precinct have liberty to provide a place for to erect a school house." The new house was erected soon after. It was located near the present residence of Colonel Eleazar Beal, and was used as a school-house till 1799, and then gave place to another on the same spot.

In the warrant for the Precinct Meeting held April 27th, 1767, an article was inserted "To see if the Precinct will raise any money to add to that they Draw from the Town Treasury in order to support a Moving School in said Precinct the whole of the year." "It past in the negative." In some towns "a Moving School" was often allowed. It "moved" from place to place for the better accommodation of the scattered families.

"March, 7th 1771, Voted that a considerable Part of the School Money this year should be laid out to encourage Women Schools leaving it to Cornet Bafs Discretion to manage the same."

There is no record of the names of school-masters for the first forty years of the precinct's history. Dr. Alden says Rev. Mr. Eaton probably taught the winter school at times; and that Jabez Porter, commonly called "Master Porter," was the most distinguished teacher. Toward the latter part of the last century, Mr. Porter's name appears in the Braintree town records at different dates, as the teacher of a "Latin School." It is thought that he kept the school in all the precincts — North, Middle, and South — probably four months in each, during the year. For the period from 1769 to 1792 a list of the school teachers in this precinct has been drawn from the Braintree town books (by the kindness of Samuel A. Bates, Esq., Town Clerk of Braintree), where for this term of years only, the record of orders on the treasury is found, stating the name of the



teacher, the length of the school, and the wages paid. The names are here given in the order of time; the numeral after a name indicates the number of years of service; its absence signifies one year only:

Jabez Porter, 4; Joshua Hayward, 3; Ebenezer Crane; Andrew Hunt, 5; Edward Jones; Jonathan Allen; Jabez Thayer, 2; Josiah Babcock, 3; Samuel Savill, 2; Isaac Thayer, 7; Zachaeus Thayer, 8; Benjamin Webb; Moses Taft, 2; Eleazar Taft, 3; Joseph Taft, 2; Phinehas Taft, 3; Joseph Wales; Samuel Allen; Bartholomew Thayer, 2; Captain Jacob Wales; Seth Turner, Jr., 8; Samuel Bass; Elijah French, 2; Doctor Ebenezer Alden, 4; John Faxon; Daniel Wild, 3; John French; Major Jeremiah Niles, 2; Doctor Benjamin Turner, a "Grammar School;" Eliphalet Sawin, Jr.

The female teachers from 1770-1790, were as follows: Captain Ephraim Hunt's wife; Reliance Allen; Ruth Porter; Phebe Thayer, 2; Deacon Peter Thayer's daughter (probably the same as the last); Abigail Wales; wife of Micaiah White; Hannah Wild, daughter of Jonathan, 2; Mrs. Emms; wife of Simeon Hayward; wife of Josiah Thayer; Mary Porter; Mrs. Sally Turner, 2; Mrs. Esther Dyer, 3, Polly Davenport Packard; Kate, or Caty, Taft, 2; Sukey Taft, 3.

Wages varied with the grade of the school, and the ability of the teacher. The master of a "Grammar School" (sometimes called a "Latin School") received high wages, as he was expected to prepare boys for college. These higher schools were not attended by girls (as a rule throughout New England) till about 1800. The following items will serve as examples of the teachers' pay: 1770, Jabez Porter (Grammar School), four months, £10. s13. d4. Andrew Hunt, two months, £2. s8. 1771, Jabez Thayer, two months, £3. s10. Captain Ephraim Hunt's wife, nine weeks, £1. s7. 1772, Deacon Peter Thayer's daughter, ten weeks, £2.

In 1730 the South Precinct drew from the town treasury as its proportion of the school money, £8; in 1790, £35. s5. d9; and in 1792 (after Quincy had been set off), £61. s10.

With the year 1793 the South Precinct of Braintree, which had exercised watchful care over the schools within its territory for sixty years, yielded the responsible charge into the keeping of the new town of Randolph, and became thereafter the First Parish of Randolph.



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